











# ANNE BOLEYN:

A DRAMATIC POEM.

---

BY THE REV. H. H. MILMAN,  
PROFESSOR OF POETRY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

---

LONDON:  
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

---

MDCCCXXVI.



## INTRODUCTION.

---

THE subject of the following Drama had long appeared to me peculiarly adapted to the purposes of Poetry. I had, some time ago, imagined a sketch, in a great degree similar to that which I have now filled up. The course of professional Study, which led me to the early Annals of our Church, recalled it to my remembrance, and, as it were, forced it on my attention. In the outline of the Plot, and the development of the characters, especially that of Anne Boleyn, I have endeavoured to preserve historical truth : where History is silent, I have given free scope to poetic licence, and introduced a character entirely imaginary.



In endeavouring to embody that awful spirit of fanaticism—the more awful, because strictly conscientious—which was arrayed against our early Reformers, I hope to be considered as writing of those times alone. The representation of the manner in which bigotry hardens into intolerance, intolerance into cruelty and an infringement on the great eternal principles of morality, can never be an unprofitable lesson. The Annals of all Nations, in which Reformation was begun or completed; those of the League in France, of the Low Countries and Spain, as well as of England, will fully bear me out in the picture which I have drawn: but I have no hesitation in asserting that even in those times the wise and good among the Roman Catholics reprobated, as strongly as ourselves, the sanguinary and unprincipled means by which the Power of the Papacy was maintained.

I should observe, that I have, I trust with no unpardonable anachronism, anticipated the perfect organization of that Society, from which, as Robertson has with justice stated, “mankind have derived more advantages, and received greater injuries, than from any other of the religious fraternities.” Though its Founder had already made many proselytes, the Society was not formally incorporated till about five years after the death of Anne Boleyn.

It may appear almost superfluous to add, that the manner in which the Poem is written, as well as the religious nature of the interest, must for ever preclude it from public representation.



ANNE BOLEYN,

*A DRAMATIC POEM.*



## CHARACTERS.

---

KING HENRY VIII.

ARCHBISHOP CRANMER.

STEPHEN GARDINER, *Bishop of Winchester.*

LORD ROCHEFORD, *Brother of Queen Anne.*

DUKE of NORFOLK.

SIR HENRY NORREYS,

SIR FRANCIS WESTON,

SIR WILLIAM BRERETON,

} *Attendants on Queen Anne.*

SIR WILLIAM KINGSTON, *Lieutenant of the Tower.*

ANGELO CARAFFA, *a follower of Ignatius Loyola.*

MARK SMEATON.

QUEEN ANNE.

COUNTESS of ROCHEFORD.

COUNTESS of WILTSHIRE, *Mother of Queen Anne.*

MAGDALENE SMEATON.





## ANNE BOLEYN.

---

### SCENE.

*A small Garden near Westminster.*

MARK SMEATON, MAGDALENE SMEATON.

MAGDALENE.

Oh welcome, welcome—though I scarcely hoped  
That he who long hath dwelt in foreign climes,  
And now comes wearing the proud garb of Courts,  
Would waste the precious treasure of a thought  
On poor forgotten sister Magdalene.

MARK.

Still the same humble tender Magdalene,  
Who deems, that none can rate her modest worth  
More high than her retiring self. Sweet sister,  
I would not wound thy heaven-devoted ears  
With the unwonted sounds of worldly flattery ;  
But in far distant climes, 'mid strangers' faces,



That night was sweetest when I dream'd of thee,  
Our native garden here, our little world  
Of common joys and sorrows.

MAGDALENE.

Dearest Mark,  
The heart deems truth whate'er it wishes true.  
And wilt thou now and then steal hither to me,  
When thou'rt not call'd for at the Court? wilt bring  
Thy music, such as in the royal Chapel  
Thou'rt wont to sing? Rude though mine ear, it loves  
Thy music, brother.

MARK.

Dearest, yes, I'll bring  
All these, and hymns forbidden there; there's one  
Was taught me by a simple fisher boy,  
That sail'd the azure tide of that bright bay  
That laves the walls of Naples: as he sung—  
What time the midnight waves were starr'd with barks,  
Each with its single glowworm lamp, that tipt  
The waters round with rippling lines of light—

You would have thought Heaven's queen had strew'd  
around

Silence, like that among the stars, when pause  
The Angels in ecstatic adoration.

MAGDALENE.

Speak on, speak on!—Were it a stranger's voice  
That thus discoursed, I could lose days in listening;  
But thine——

MARK.

Oh! Magdalene, thou know'st not here  
In our chill, damp, and heavy atmosphere,  
The power, might, magic, mystery of sweet sounds!  
Oh! on some rock to sit, the twilight winds  
Breathing all odour by—at intervals  
To hear the hymnings of some virgin choir,  
With pauses musical as music's self,  
Come swelling up from deep and unseen distance:  
Or under some vast dome, like Heaven's blue cope,  
All full and living with the liquid deluge  
Of harmony, till pillars, walls, and aisles,

The altar paintings and cold images,  
 Catch life and motion, and the weight of feeling  
 Lies like a load upon the breathless bosom !  
 But speaking thus, hours will seem minutes, sister,  
 And——

MAGDALENE.

Thou would'st say farewell. Yet ere we part  
 I long to speak one word—I dare not say  
 Of counsel—but the love, whose only study  
 Is one heart's book, gains deeper knowledge, Mark,  
 Of its dark leaves, than schools can teach, or man  
 Learn from his fellow men.

MARK.

Sage monitress !

MAGDALENE.

Oh ! Mark, Mark—in one cradle were we laid,  
 Our souls were born together, bred together ;  
 In all thy thoughts, emotions, my fond love  
 Anticipated thine own consciousness ;  
 I felt them, ere thyself knew thine own feelings :

And never yet impetuous wish was born  
 In that warm heart, but till fulfilment crown'd it  
 Thou wert its slave—its bounden, fetter'd slave.  
 Oh ! watch thyself, mistrust, fear —

MARK.

What ?

MAGDALENE.

Why all things.—

In that loose Court, they say, each hard observance,  
 Fast, penance, all the rites of holy Church,  
 Are scoff'd ; the dainty limbs are all too proud  
 T' endure the chastening sackcloth. Sin is still  
 Contagious : like herself are those that wait  
 On that heretical and wicked Queen.

MARK.

The wicked Queen !—oh ! sister, dearest sister,  
 For the first time I'd see thy pure cheek burn  
 With penitent tears ; go kneel, and ask Heaven's pardon—  
 Scourge thy misjudging heart—the wicked Queen !  
 Heaven's living miracle of all its graces !

There's not a breathing being in her presence  
But watches the least motion of a look,  
Th' unutter'd intimation of desire,  
And lives upon the hope of doing service,  
That done, is like the joy blest Angels feel  
In minist'ring to prayers of holiest Saints.  
Authority she wears as 'twere her birthright ;  
And when our rooted knees would grow to earth  
In adoration, reassuring gaiety  
Makes the soul smile at its own fears.

MAGDALENE.

But, Mark,  
Believes she as the Church believes ?

MARK.

I know not  
What she believes—I see but what she does.  
Loose Court, and shameless Queen !—her audience  
Is of the wretched, destitute, forlorn :  
The usher to that Court is Beggary,  
And Want the chamberlain ; her flatterers, those

Whose eloquence is full and bursting hearts ;  
Her parasites, wan troops of starving men  
Round the full furnish'd board—pale dowerless maids—  
Nuns, like thyself, cast forth from their chaste cloisters  
To meet the bitter usage of the world ;  
While holiest men are ever in her presence :  
Nor can their lavish charity exhaust  
The treasures of her goodness.

MAGDALENE.

Oh ! Mark, Mark—

My only joy on earth—that, if my soul  
E'er dream'd of Heaven, wert evermore a part,  
Th' intelligible part of its full bliss,  
Thou art not warp'd by pride of new opinion ?

MARK.

Is't new t'adore the mingled consummation  
Of beauty, gentleness, and goodness ?

MAGDALENE.

Cease !

For this, for hearing this, I must do penance—

Fast, weep, and pray ; and, oh ! beware, beware —  
The holy Father comes, whose keen eye reads  
The inmost soul ; I 've felt him pluck the thought  
I dared not speak from its dark sanctuary  
I' the heart, and cast it down before mine eyes  
Till my soul shuddered at its own corruption.  
He sees us not—stand back—'twere ill t' intrude  
Upon his saintly privacy, whose soul  
Haply is prostrate at Our Lady's feet,  
In our behalf, his poor unworthy flock.  
Half of his life, our lady Abbess says,  
Is spent in Heaven, while the pale body here  
Pines in the absence of its nobler guest.

MARK.

How, Angelo !

MAGDALENE.

Peacc, peace ; seal lips and ears.

[*They retire.*]

*ANGELO CARAFFA.*

## ANGELO CARAFFA.

They cross'd me, and I needs must follow—to th' Abbey ;  
T' insult their fathers' graves ; to mock the Saints  
That from the high empurpled windows glare  
On the proud worshippers, whose secret hearts  
Disdain their intercession ; scarce a lamp  
Burnt on the prayerless shrines, and here and there  
Some wan sad votress, in Our Lady's chapel,  
Listening in vain for the full anthem, told  
Her beads, and shrunk from her own lonely voice.  
But when I saw the Arch-heretic enrobed  
In the cope and pall of mitred Canterbury,  
Lift the dread Host with misbelieving hands,  
And heard another's voice profane read out,  
In their own dissonant and barbarous tongue,  
The living word of God, the choking wrath  
Convulsed my throat, and hurrying forth I sought



A secret and unechoing place, t' unload  
My burthen'd heart !

'Twas the first time—the last  
That holy Indignation hath o'erleap'd  
Wisdom's strong barriers—the ill-govern'd features  
Play'd traitor to the close-wrapt heart.

But thou  
That art a part of God's dread majesty,  
In whose dusk robe his own disastrous purposes  
Th' Almighty veils, twin-born with Destiny,  
Inexorable Secrecy ! come, cowl  
This soul in deep impervious blackness !—Grant  
I may deny myself the pride and fame  
Of bringing back this loose apostate land  
To the true Faith. Be all mine agency  
Secret as are the springs of living fire  
In the world's centre, bury deep my name,  
That mortal eye ne'er read it, till emblazed  
Amid the roll of Christ's great Saints and Martyrs  
It shake away the oblivious gloom of ages.

*ANGELO, MARK, MAGDALENE.*

ANGELO.

Ye may approach—the youth, or I mistake,  
Of whom Saavedra wrote, whose dulcet voice  
And skilful handling the sweet lute were famed  
Through Italy—most fair report, young man,  
Hath been thy harbinger.

MARK.

Good reverend father,  
That men so wise, whose words are treasured counsels  
To mightiest Kings, should deign to note a name  
Like mine, moves wonder.

ANGELO.

Youth, thou hast a soul,  
For which thy spiritual guide must answer,  
As for a Monarch's; in her care, the Church  
That guards the loftiest, ne'er o'erlooks the meanest.  
Thou 'rt new about the Court, and our good Queen,

With gracious affability, will sit  
Listening to thy sweet languaged lute ; thou'rt there  
In high esteem.

MARK.

Her Highness hath been pleased  
To hear me more than once ; but word of praise  
From her had been a treasure, that my memory  
Had laid in store, for my whole life to brood on.

ANGELO (*aside*).

So warm !——I had forgot thy station, youth ;  
But with the great we rank far less by birth  
Than estimation ; and the power of ministering  
To their delight becomes nobility.

MARK.

What ?——says your wisdom so ?

ANGELO.

Good youth, I charge thee,  
Cherish that modesty that well becomes thee ;  
But yet if Fame belie thee not, thy powers  
May bind high-scop'd Advancement to thy service——

Thou may'st compete ere long with——which affects  
Her Majesty most of her servants?

MARK.

Each

Partakes alike of that all-winning ease—  
Not the proud condescension, which disdains  
Most manifestly when it stoops the lowest—  
All are her slaves, seeming almost her equals :  
She's loved ——

ANGELO.

Enough !—Report speaks bounteously  
Of Henry Norreys : he and William Brereton  
And Francis Weston, are about her still——

MARK.

Not one, I do believe, would deem his life  
Ill barter'd for her service——

ANGELO.

And Lord Rochford,  
Her noble brother—as a Poet, youth,  
His art is kindred to thine own, its rival

In making the mute air we breathe an element  
Of purest intellectual joy—the Queen  
To her close privacy admits.

MARK.

I've heard  
She takes delight beyond all words to hear  
Our harsher English tongue, by his smooth skill,  
And noble Surrey's, and learn'd Wyatt's, flow  
Melodious, as the honey-lipp'd Italian.

ANGELO.

'Tis well. Thy orphan'd youth, I learn, Mark Smeaton,  
Wants that imperious curb Heaven delegates  
To parents' hands; mine order, rank, and station  
Give to my counsels th' impress of command:  
I charge thee then, by thine own soul—beware—  
Should golden honours, as belike they may,  
Shower on thee, wear them still with humbleness.  
Serve that bewitching but too easy Queen  
Assiduously, but still honourably.  
Aspire not, by whatever voice thou'rt summon'd,

To perilous distinction ; youth, again  
I say, take heed—one single day omit not,  
On forfeiture of my paternal care,  
To pour thy full confessing soul before me.

MARK.

What can your Wisdom mean ?

MAGDALENE.

He means, dear brother,  
To merit his poor servants' prayers for this—  
Prayers that shall mount before the earliest lark,  
Earth's first thanksgiving voice t' indulgent Heaven.  
Withdraw, withdraw, he heeds no more—away.

[*Exeunt.*

ANGELO.

That warning was a master-stroke : it brings  
The impossible within the scope of thought ;  
We do forbid but what may come to pass ;  
And he will brood on it, because forbidden,  
Till his whole soul is madness. All the rest  
Are full of their proud honour, and disdain  
To torture with vain villanous misconstruction

Each innocent phrase to looseness. Cursed woman !  
'Gainst whom remorselessness is loftiest duty,  
And mercy sin beyond Heaven's grace—think'st thou  
To be a Queen, and dare to be a woman !  
Play fool upon thy dizzy precipice,  
Nor smile, nor word, nor look, nor thought but 's noted  
In our dark registers ; each playful jest  
Is chronicled, and we are rich in all  
That 's ocular proof and circumstance of guilt  
To jealousy's distemper'd ear.

And thou,  
Proud King ! the Church's head ! —each lustful thought,  
Each murderous deed, is a new link of the chain  
By which our slaves are trammell'd : we'll let slip  
Thy own fierce passions, ruthless as the dogs  
Of war, to prey on thy obdurate heart ;  
And they shall drag thee down, base, suppliant,  
Beneath our feet—or drive thee maddening on,  
An hideous monster of all guilt, to fright  
The world from its apostasy, and brand  
The Heretic cause with thy eternal shame.

QUEEN ANNE, ATTENDANTS, *her* ALMONER.

So please your Majesty, your pensioners  
Flock in such hungry and still gathering troops,  
The table's full.

Then, Sir, spread more, the Queen  
Commands it.

**But the cost, your Grace !**

Weigh that  
 When thou dost serve ourself, not our poor neighbours.  
 Why sate I down but yesterday, 'mid pomps  
 And luxuries that might have fed a village?



Go coin those wines, barter for homelier cates  
Those candied superfluities.

ALMONER.

It stands not  
With the King's honour thus to mulct and limit  
Your Highness state.

QUEEN.

Still less, Sir, to contract  
And weigh with base frugality the alms  
His Grace bestows through me, his humble agent.  
The bounty of the King, Heaven's delegate,  
Should be as Heaven's : the Sun, that through the grate  
Of some barr'd dungeon lights the pallid cheek  
Of the poor prisoner, is a gracious gift ;  
But that which argues the great God of Nature  
Is the rich prodigality of light,  
That kindles the wide universal sky  
And gladdens worlds. But to descend to truths  
Of homelier prudence. 'Tis not well to feast  
A lazy herd of sleek unlabouring drones.

Most true, Sir ; but his Majesty hath pleased  
To take some certain Convents and rich Abbeyes  
Into his royal hands ; they that were bred  
To sun themselves in careless indolence  
Are cast abroad to buffet the hard world  
For bare subsistence ; even the once mitred Lords  
Of manors, benefices, lands, and palaces,  
Ill husbanding their limited maintenance,  
Are brought to beggary and painful want ;  
Therefore our bounty must outrun awhile  
Our better wisdom.

ALMONER.

I obey your Highness.

QUEEN.

And have our best thanks for your prudent caution  
As for your prompt compliance.—

Gracious Heaven !

I thought a throne would give the power of blessing  
Illimitable—to speak, were to make glad  
All hearts. Alas ! the higher we aspire,



LADY ROCHFORD (*aside*).

Still shamed

And still rebuked—curse on her proud humility!

QUEEN.

Enough of this—in truth the board that led  
To this grave reasoning forces oft a smile  
Even on Compassion's tearful face: the strange,  
The motley groups! the doubts, the awe, the fears,  
The pride of beggary! There are, who patch,  
As though in honour of the royal feast,  
With scarlet and rich hues their loose hung tatters;  
And some will creep, as they were led to justice,  
Along the hall, and the next instant pledge,  
Like jovial courtiers, the Queen's health. But those  
Of the old religion move me most. They steal  
Reluctant with suspicious steps, each instant  
Crossing themselves, to exorcise, no doubt,  
The fiends beneath the board: each time they touch  
Or dish or flagon, they renew the charm,  
As though the viands flavour'd of rank heresy,

And 'twere a deadly sin to taste the dole  
 Of wicked Gospeller. Last noon came in  
 Two maids, whose tatter'd veils but ill conceal'd  
 Their wan and famine sunken cheeks, not worn  
 With holy fast, but bitter withering want ;  
 Desperate they ate, as conscious of their sin :  
 Anon a pattering sound of beads I heard,  
 A voice half breathless muttering broken Aves ;  
 Lo, the good lady Abbess, come to save  
 Her soul-endanger'd charge ; but, sad to tell,  
 The tempting fumes o'erpower'd her holy rigour,  
 And the grave mother to the flesh-pots fell.

ATTENDANT.

Madam, the Countess Wiltshire.

*LADY WILTSHIRE.*

LADY WILTSHIRE.

Dearest Anne !

My child !—Your Highness' pardon, my old lips

Will never learn th' unwonted reverence ;  
Still clings the old familiar fondness round me.

## QUEEN.

Dear mother, have I ceased to be your child  
Being a Queen ? for your attendance, Ladies,  
We thank you, and ere long may task your service ;  
But now—in truth I play the Queen but ill  
Beside the cradle of my child—and thus  
Within my mother's arms——

[ *The Ladies retire.*

## LADY WILTSHIRE.

Oh ! who had thought  
Our little playful Anne, all mirth and frolic,  
The veriest madcap that ere made a mother  
Tremble, rejoice, and smile, and weep at once,  
Should sit on England's throne. Nay, if thou bribe not  
My garrulous age, I may betray strange tales  
Not all beseeeming the high sceptred state  
Of the Queen's majesty.

QUEEN.

I much mistrust you—

In truth I do

LADY WILTSHIRE.

Well, Heaven be praised for all,  
Chiefly that I and thy good Father, Anne,  
Have lived with our own eyes to witness it.  
And now come when it will, thou'lt have me buried  
In royal state ; my funeral pomp shall have  
Sceptres and royal scutcheons in its train :  
I'll not endure that my base epitaph  
Write me plain wife of good Sir Thomas Boleyn ;  
I'll be emblazed in characters of gold,  
The mother of Queen Anne.

QUEEN.

Ay, in good time,  
Some twenty years or more we'll think of this :  
But, by my faith, best mother, there's no joy  
Of all that wait like chain'd and harness'd slaves  
Around the thrones of kings—the pomp, the splendour,

The hearty voice of popular acclaim,  
The grave esteem of godly men, the power  
Boundless of succouring the distress'd, the grace  
And favour of a royal Husband, worthiest,  
Were he a peasant, of our fondest dotage ;  
The consciousness of being an humble means  
To build anew Christ's desolated Church—  
There's nought more full, sincere, and rapturous—nought—  
Than thus repaying all the pains, the prayers  
Of her that bore me, nursed me, trained me up  
To this high doom, making me like herself.  
Mother, all other joys make my cheek smile ;  
But thy affectionate and blameless pride  
Makes gladness speak her truer language—tears •  
And here comes one will not rebuke our weeping,  
My noble Rochford.



*LORD ROCHFORD.*

ROCHFORD.

Does your Highness pardon  
This bold intrusion ?

QUEEN.

I will pardon all  
But this cold courteous ceremony :  
I would not, Brother, for my throne, forego  
My station in thy heart. Wert thou a stranger,  
Thy letter'd fame had given thee entrance here.  
'Tis such as thou adorn a court, less honour'd  
Than honouring ; for you Poets hold a court  
Which whoso visits not hath lost all title  
To that nobility endures for ages,  
Where Kings are proud to enter. There's no clime  
Nor age, not even the Heaven of Heavens, but sends,  
Summon'd by your plumed herald Fantastic,  
Its embassy of noblest images

To do you service ; and ye entertain them  
Right royally, do make them move to music  
That they forget the sounds of their own spheres.

ROCHFORD.

Your Highness !

QUEEN.

Nay, your Sister !

ROCHFORD.

Sweet rebuke :

Dear Sister, I've been toiling in your service,  
Or rather turning toil to sweet delight ;  
I've been enriching my rude verse with thoughts  
I stole from thee in that religious converse  
We held some days ago, when we discussed  
'The idolatrous practices of Rome, adoring  
With disproportionate and erring reverence  
The Holy Virgin. I've a hymn, methinks  
Will not offend.—Will't please your Highness hear it ?

QUEEN.

Most willingly, it suits the hour—for eve,

That steals so softly on the quiet world,  
Seems made for solemn music, even as nature  
Breath'd silence over all in earth and Heaven,  
Vocal alone with grateful man's thanksgiving.

ROCHFORD.

Here—call Mark Smeaton, bid him bring his lute.

*The above, SMEATON.*

ROCHFORD.

Now, boy, that tune I told thee of within ;  
And look thou touch it masterly : her Grace  
Hath that nice ear that vibrates to the touch  
Of harmony, so tremblingly alive  
The slightest discord jars on it like anguish.  
Not with that shaking hand—

Look, the Queen smiles.

Right, boy, thou own'st that inspiration.

*The Protestant's Hymn to the Virgin.*

## 1.

Oh ! Virgin Mother ! not with choral hymn  
Around the lamp-deck'd altar high and dim,  
Where silver bells are faintly ringing,  
And odorous censers lightly swinging ;  
Till blazing forth above, beneath, around,  
Rolls the full organ's never-ceasing sound :  
Not with the costly gift of gold and gem,  
Where thy enshrined image stands,  
Loveliest, though fram'd by daring human hands,  
And halo'd with thy sun-like diadem :  
Not with the deep devotion of the heart,  
Close folded arms across the heaving breast,  
And words that find no breath, and sighs suppress—  
Mary, we seek not thee  
With suppliant agony  
Of burning tears, that all unbidden start ;  
To mortal name our jealous souls deny  
The incommunicable meed of Deity.

## 2.

And thou, where'er thy everlasting seat—

If ever human prayer, with noise unmeet,

Up to thy radiant throne on high,

Ascend through the reluctant sky ;

Or earthly music its fond notes intrude

Upon the silence of beatitude :

Lowliest as loveliest among mortal maids !

With all the grief that may abate

The changeless bliss of thy empyreal state,

Ever thy sad dejected look upbraids

The misdirected homage, vain and blind ;

Aside thou turnest thy offended ears

Where one Hosanna fills th' acclaiming spheres ;

Oh ! conscious child of Eve,

Mary, thy soul doth grieve

At godhead's sacred rite to thee assign'd ;

Mourning the rash unholy injury done

To the redeeming name of thy Almighty Son !

## 3.

Yet ne'er Incarnate Godhead might reside,  
Save where his conscious presence glorified ;  
    Thee, therefore, lovelier far we deem  
    Than eye may see or soul may dream.  
Unchanged—unwasted by the pains of earth,  
Thou didst bring forth the fair immortal birth :  
And Hope and Faith, and deep maternal Joy,  
    And Love, and not unholy Pride,  
    With soft unevanescent glory dyed  
Thy cheeks, while gazing on the peerless boy ;  
And surer than prophetic consciousness,  
That he was born all human-kind to bless !  
The musical and peopled air was dim,  
    Mary, where'er thy haunt,  
    With angels visitant,  
Nor always did the viewless Seraphim  
Stand with their plumed glories unconfest,  
To see the Eternal Child while cradled on thy breast.

## 4.

And what, though in the winter, bleak and wild,  
'Thou didst bring forth the unregarded child,

    The summon'd star made haste to shine

    Upon that new-born face divine,

And the low dwelling of the stabled beast  
Shone with the homage of the gorgeous East.

Though driven far off to Nilus' reedy shore,

    As thou didst slake thy burning feet,

    Where o'er the desert fount the arching palm-trees  
    meet :

Still its soft pillow'd charge thy bosom bore ;

And thou didst watch in rapture his sweet sleep ;

Or gaze, while sportive he thy locks carest,

Or drank the living fountain of thy breast.

    Yet, Mary, o'er thy soul

    A silent sadness stole,

Nor could thy swelling eyes refuse to weep,

For Rachel, desolate, in agony,

And Bethlehem's mothers childless all but thee.

## 5.

Nor fail'd thy watchful spirit to behold

The secret inborn Deity unfold :

Nor e'er without a painless awe,

The wonderous youth the mother saw ;

For in the Baptist's playful love appear'd

The homage of a heart that almost fear'd :

And though in meek subjection still he dwelt

Beneath thy husband's lowly home ;

Oft from his lips would words mysterious come ;

The soul untaught the present Saviour felt.

As more than prophet raptures o'er him broke,

And fuller still the inspiration pour'd,

Half-bow'd to earth unconscious knees adored :

Mary, before thy sight,

The wonder-working might,

Prerogative of highest Godhead woke ;

Unfearful yet !—when instant at his sign,

The water vessels blush'd with generous wine.



## 6.

Blest o'er all women ! did thy heart repress,  
Humble as chaste, each thought of loftiness,  
    When wonder after wonder burst  
    Around the child thy bosom nurst ;—  
The dumb began to sing, the lame to leap ;  
His unwet footsteps trod the unyielding deep ;  
Still at his word disease and anguish ceased,  
    And healthful blood began to flow,  
    Ruddy, beneath the leper's skin of snow ;  
And shuddering fiends the tortured soul released ;  
And from the grave arose the summon'd dead ?  
Yet, ah ! did ne'er thy mother's heart repine,  
When he set forth upon his dread design ?  
    Mary, did ne'er thy love  
    His piteous fate reprove,  
When on the rock reposed his houseless head ?  
Seem'd it not strange to thy officious zeal—  
All pains, all sorrows, save his own, to heal ?

## 7.

Yet, oh ! how awful, Desolate ! to thee,

Thus to have shrined the living Deity !

When underneath the loaded Rood,

Forlorn the childless mother stood :

Then when that voice, whose first articulate breath

Thrill'd her enraptured ear, had now in death

Bequeath'd her to his care whom best he loved ;

When the cold death-dew bathed his brow,

And faint the drooping head began to bow,

Wert thou not, saddest, too severely proved ?

As in thy sight each rigid limb grew cold,

And the lip whiten'd with the burning thirst,

And the last cry of o'erwrought anguish burst,

Where then the Shiloh's crown,

Mary, the Christ's renown,

By Prophets and Angelic harps foretold ?

Was strength to thy undoubting spirit given ?

Or did not human love o'erpower thy trust in Heaven ?

## 8.

But when Death's conqueror from the tomb return'd,

Was thine the heart that at his voice ne'er burn'd ?

Follow'd him not thy constant sight,

Slow melting in Heaven's purest white,

To take his ancient endless seat on high,

On the right hand of Parent Deity ?

And when thine earthly pilgrimage was ended,

We deem not, but that circled round,

With ringing harps of Heaven's most glorious sound,

Thy spirit, redeem'd through thy Son's blood, ascended :

There evermore in lowliest loftiness,

Meek thou admirest, how that living God,

That fills the Heavens and Earth, in thee abode.

Mary, we yield to thee

All but idolatry ;

We gaze, admire, and wonder—love and bless :

Pure, blameless, holy, every praise be thine,

All honour save thy Son's, all glory but divine.

## SCENE.

*The Palace of the Bishop of Winchester.*

ANGELO.

More blood ! more blood !—three noble brethren more,  
From the Carthusian's decimated house<sup>(1)</sup>,  
Doom'd to the block—ay, pour it forth like water !  
Make your Thames red, till your proud galleys plough  
Their way, and leave a sanguine wake behind them :  
Set wide the gates of Hell, and summon thence  
Murder, enthron'd on your high judgment seat ;  
Arm her dark sister, lawless Massacre,  
With the dread axe of public Execution ;  
Can Hell, or Earth's confederate Kings prevail  
'Gainst the true Church ?—But, oh ! ye martyr'd souls !  
Spirits, with whose saintly blood their robes are wet—  
Oh ! all-accomplished More, and sainted Fisher,  
Rejoice ye not that with your death ye rouse  
The fire-wing'd ministers of Heaven's just wrath,

That welcoming your souls to th' abode of bliss,  
Stand with spread wings, and ready girt for vengeance !

But ye, the pulpit Captains of the Schism,  
Worse than the worst—soul murderers, Hell's Apostles—  
Ye would pour oil into the Church's wounds  
That your own parricide hands have rent, and think  
They will not plead against you.—Oh ! ye blind  
To earthly wisdom as Heaven's light, that dare not  
Greatly to sin, or, politicly severe,  
Crush where ye conquer—ye will stand aloof  
From the black scaffold, preach, protest, forswear  
All deeds of blood ; yet your infected cause  
Shall smell of it to latest generations !

Oh fools ! to plunge in internecine strife,  
Yet pause, and fear to slay :—deserving none,  
And by Heaven's throne receiving none, to dream  
Of showing mercy ; either way ye perish,  
Or shed the martyrs' blood, whose dying voices  
Arm Earth, Hell, Heaven, 'gainst your ungodly cause ;  
Abstain, the unchecked recoil of our fierce vengeance  
Shall sweep you to the appointed pit of Hell !

*ANGELO, GARDINER.*

ANGELO.

My Lord of Winchester, thou hast received  
Our full credentials from St. Peter's chair?

GARDINER.

Brother in Christ, thou know'st this land rejects  
Rome's Bishop and his tyrannous usurpation.

ANGELO.

That Stephen Gardiner owns no power in Rome  
I know, nor yet in England. What cares he  
For King or Pontiff, so he may maintain  
The proud supremacy of Stephen Gardiner.  
A second, but a greater Wolsey, thou,  
With thine unbounded soul, would'st rule o'er all—  
Church, State, the world——

GARDINER.

Italian, thou'rt too bold-

## ANGELO.

Too true, good Islander ! but think not, Gardiner,  
I or lament or deprecate thy greatness.  
What qualities that make man fit to rule  
Meet not in Winchester's capacious soul ?  
The statesman's large and comprehensive mind ;  
The politician's keen prophetic eye ;  
The scholar's mastery o'er the realm of knowledge ;  
Smooth manners, that with courtly art persuade ;  
The eloquent pen, pregnant with thought profound ;  
Quickness to penetrate each dark design ;  
Sagacity to wind the unwilling soul  
To his own purpose : wisest in the counsel ;  
Deep read in books—in man's dark heart still deeper ;  
Most knowing in all Europe's courts. Blest England,  
If she but prize his worth ; himself most blest,  
If but to his own interests blind, he err not  
On his ascendant path——

## GARDINER.

Your meaning, brother ?

## ANGELO.

A Churchman, and abase the Church's rule !  
To wrest the thunder from his awful grasp,  
Whose delegates are we, as he is Heaven's,  
And place it in the temporal tyrant's hands,  
That hath no scope nor end but his own pride  
And carnal lust of sway ! Rome covets power,  
But for her sons, with wholesome tyranny,  
To their own weal, to govern kings and nations.  
Oh ! traitor to thy people, King, and God,  
As to thyself ! to cast away the sceptre  
That sways man's soul to his immortal vantage !  
Son of the Holy Church, I exorcise  
The fiend of disobedience from thine heart ;  
By all thou lov'st—pomp, majesty, dominion,  
By all thou hat'st—th' apostate cause and crew,  
Th' all powerful Cranmer !—ay, I see thy cheek  
Blanch, thy low quivering lip—by all thou fear'st,  
By all thou hop'st, thou'rt curs, thou'rt Rome's, thou'rt  
Heaven's !



GARDINER.

Good Father, walls have ears—the treacherous air,  
With terrible delation, wanders round  
The thrones of Kings.

ANGELO.

Thou think'st not, I or Rome  
Would urge a rashness, which might wreck our cause :  
Would have thee cast this wise dissembling off,  
By which thou hast won the easy confidence  
Of foolish heretics : be supple still,  
And seeming true, thou 'rt worthier of our trust.  
We know thy heart our own, and lend awhile  
Thy tongue, thy pen, to the proud King, t' abase him  
To a more abject slave of thee and Rome.  
Now hear me, Prelate, glut thine ear with tidings,  
For there are dark and deep delved plots, that scape  
Even Gardiner's lynx-eyed sight—thy soul shall laugh.  
The Queen—the Boleyn—the false harlot heretic—  
She's in our toils—lost, doom'd —

GARDINER.

I know the King  
Is fallen away to a new lust, and hates  
Where once he doted.—But her death!—

ANGELO.

What! versed  
In courts like Gardiner, and not know how close  
Death waits upon the blasting hate of Kings?  
I tell thee, she shall die—die on a scaffold!  
Die branded like a base adulteress!—  
Die like a heretic—the Church's foe!—  
Die unabsolved, unhousel'd—die for ever!

GARDINER.

Ay, but her blameless life; the love she wins  
By subtle sorcery from every rank.

ANGELO.

Blameless!—an heretic avow'd, proclaim'd,  
The nursing mother of Apostasy!  
Heap crime on crime, load all her soul with blackness,  
Make her name hideous to the end of time;

Yet is she not, to a true son of the Church,  
More odious, more abominable—all sins  
Are in that one ! Adultery, murder, nought  
Is wanting but desire or meet occasion,  
And the loose heart gives way.

GARDINER.

But this Jane Seymour  
Is of no better brood.

ANGELO.

What reck we who  
Or what she is, she shall give place t' another,  
Another still, till the fierce flame burns out,  
And shame, remorse, and horror, all the furies  
That howl and madden round the guilty bed,  
Seize on the abject Monarch ! He shall lick  
The dust beneath our feet, and pay what price  
The Church ordain, for tardy reconciliation.

GARDINER.

Brother, draw near ! thy speech hath bodied forth  
What hath come floating o'er my secret thought.

ANGELO.

And own'st thou not Heaven's manifest inspiration ?

GARDINER.

So thou wilt bring to pass what Gardiner left  
In unaccomplish'd vision ! Man of men,  
What fame shall wait, what canonizing glory  
On sainted Angelo.

ANGELO.

While Stephen Gardiner  
Must sink into the baser rank. Oh ! fear not,  
Nor jealously mistrust me, lest I cross  
Thy upward path : I have forsworn the world,  
Not with the formal oaths that burst like flax,  
But those that chain the soul with triple iron.  
Earth hath no guerdon I may covet, none  
I may enjoy.—Thou, Stephen Gardiner,  
Shalt rule submissive Prelates, Peers and Kings,  
Loftiest in station, as in mind the mightiest ;  
And a perpetual noon of golden power  
Shall blaze around thy lordly mitred state.

I'm girt for other journeys: at that hour,  
When all but crown'd the righteous work, this Isle  
Half bow'd again to the Holy See, I go  
Far in some savage land unknown, remote  
From civilized or reasonable life,  
From letters, arts—where wild men howl around  
Their blood stain'd altars—to uplift th' unknown,  
Unawful Crucifix: I go to pine  
With famine; waste with slow disease; the loathing  
And scorn of men. And when thy race is run,  
Thou, Winchester, in marble cemetery,  
Where thy cathedral roof, like some rich grove,  
Spreads o'er, and all the walls with 'scutcheons blaze,  
Shalt lie. While anthem'd choirs and pealing organs,  
And incense clouds, and a bright heaven of lamps,  
Shall solemnize thy gorgeous obsequies;  
O'er my unsepulchred and houseless bones,  
Cast on the barren beach of the salt sea,  
Or arid desert, where the vulture flaps  
Her dreary wings, shall never wandering Priest

Or bid his beads or say one passing pray'r.  
'Thy memory shall live in this land's records  
While the sea girds the isle ; but mine shall perish  
As utterly as some base beggar's child  
'That unbaptiz'd drops like abortive fruit  
Into unhallow'd grave.

GARDINER.

Impossible !

Rome cannot waste on such wild service minds  
Like thine, nor they endure the base obedience.

ANGELO.

Man of this world, thou know'st not those who tread  
The steps of great Ignatius, those that bear  
The name of Jesus and his Cross. I've sunk  
For ever title, rank, wealth—even my being ;  
And, self annihilated, boast myself  
A limb, a nameless limb, of that vast body  
That shall bespread the world, uncheck'd, untrac'd—  
Like God's own presence, every where, yet no where—  
Th' invisible control, by which Rome rules

The universal mind of man. On me  
My Father's palace gates no more shall open,  
I own no more my proud ancestral name,  
I have no property even in these weeds,  
These coarse and simple weeds I wear; nor will,  
Nor passion, nor affection, nor the love  
Of kindred touch this earth-estranged heart;  
My personal being is absorbed and dead.  
Thou think'st it much with cilice, scourge, and fast  
To macerate thy all-too pamper'd body,  
That thy sere heart is seal'd to woman's love,  
That child shall never climb thy knees, nor call thee  
His father:—on the altar of my God  
I've laid a nobler sacrifice, a soul  
Conscious it might have compass'd empire.—This  
I've done; and in no brief and frantic fit  
Of youthful lust ungratified—in the hour  
Of disappointed pride. A noble born  
Of Rome's patrician blood, rich, letter'd, versed  
In the affairs of men; no monkish dreamer

Hearing Heaven's summons in ecstatic vision.  
God spoke within this heart but with the voice  
Of stern deliberate duty, and I rose  
Resolved to sail the flood, to tread the fire—  
That 's nought—to quench all natural compunction,  
To know nor right nor wrong, nor crime nor virtue,  
But as subservient to Rome's cause and Heaven's.  
I've school'd my haughty soul to subtlest craft,  
I've strung my tender heart to bloodiest havoc,  
And stand prepared to wear the martyr's flames  
Like nuptial robes ;—far worse, to drag to the stake  
My friend, the brother of my soul—if thus  
I sear the hydra heads of heresy.

## GARDINER.

Think not thine order, brother, nor thy tenets,  
Sublime as that unquestioning devotion  
With which God's Seraphim perform his mandates,  
Unknown, unnoticed, unobserved. I lay  
The volume of this heart, that man ne'er read,  
Before thee. Here is hate of heresy,



Deep, desperate as thine own. In the dead night,  
And in the secret prayers of my dark chamber,  
Like thee I cry, Holy and True, how long—  
Oh! when will they blaze up and gladden heaven,  
The glorious purifying fires, and purge  
The land of its pollutions; when the Church  
Its pure and virgin whiteness reararray,  
And its true Sons shake off dissembling darkness?

## ANGELO.

Oh! Gardiner, beware! No lust of vengeance,  
No carnal hate, nor hope of worldly triumph,  
Must leaven our heroic zeal: God's will  
Its sole commission, its sole end God's glory.  
We must gird up our souls to this high service,  
Alike subdue and bend our pride and passions  
To our great scope; with nought too stern or dread  
But that we'll on relentless, nought too base  
But we will stoop—much is already done—

## GARDINER.

Enough, I ask no more, would know no more.

I'll stand aloof, and wait in holy hope  
Th' appointed hour.

ANGELO.

In safety reap the harvest  
Sown in the sweat of other's brows. 'Tis well,  
Thus shall it be, thus best the cause will prosper;  
And, prosper but the cause, my work is done.

---

*Whitehall.*

QUEEN (*dismissing her ladies*).

Away—we are not used to order twice;  
Away—depart.—

I am alone—alone—  
Nor that cold hateful pomp of fawning faces  
Pursues me, nor the true officious love  
Of those whose hearts I would not wring, by seeming

The wretch I am : so pour thee forth, mine heart,  
Pour thy full tide of bitterness ; for Queens  
Must weep in secret when they weep. I saw it—  
'Twas no foul vision—with unblinded eyes  
I saw it : his fond hands, as once in mine,  
Were wreath'd in hers ; he gazed upon her face  
Even with those sorcerous eyes, no woman looks at—  
I know it, ah ! too well—nor madly dote.  
That eloquence, the self-same burning words  
That seize the awe-struck soul, when weakest, thrill'd  
Her vainly-deaf averted ears.—Oh, Heaven !  
I thank thee that I cursed her not, nor him.  
Jane Seymour, like a sister did I deem thee ;  
But what of that ? Thou 'rt heaven-ordain'd to visit  
Her sins upon the head of her that dared  
To love, to wed another's lord. May'st thou  
Ne'er know the racking anguish of this hour,  
The desolation of this heart ! But thou,  
Oh ! thou, my crime, my madness ! thou on whom  
The loftiest woman had been proud to dote,

Had he been master of a straw roof'd cottage !  
Was 't just to awe, to dazzle the young mind,  
That deem'd its transport loyal admiration,  
Submissive duty all, till it awoke  
And found it thrilling, deepest woman's love ?  
Too late, too early disabused—would Heaven  
That I were still abused ! Long, long I've felt  
Love's bonds fall one by one from thy pall'd heart.  
Oh ! the fond falsehoods of my credulous soul !  
War, policy, religion, all the cares  
Of kingdoms, Europe's fate within thy hands,  
I pleaded to myself to justify  
Thy cold estrangement.

Well, 'tis o'er, and I  
Must sit alone on my cold eminence,  
All women's envy, mine own scorn and pity.  
And all the sweetness of these virgin lips,  
And all the pureness of this virgin bosom,  
And all the fondness of this virgin heart,  
Forgotten, turn'd to scorn—perchance to loathing.  
Heaven ! was no way but this, and none but He

To scourge this guilty heart? Thy will be done.  
I've still a noble Father, and a Brother,  
And, Powers of grace! my Mother—kill her not,  
Break not her heart,—for sure 'twill break to hear it.  
My child, my child, thou only wilt not feel it:  
Thy parent o'er thy face may weep, nor thou  
Be sadder for her misery; thou wilt love me  
Though thy false father scorn and loathe. My Mother—  
Oh! ne'er before would I have fled thy presence:  
Betray me not, my tear swoln eyes.

*QUEEN, LADY WILTSHIRE.*

LADY WILTSHIRE.

Dear Anne,

I come to task thy goodness: thou must use  
That witching influence none e'er resists;  
That, with a sweet and pardonable treason  
Makes the King's Grace thy slave, nor leaves him pow'r  
To think or speak but at thy pleasure——

QUEEN (*aside*).

Heaven !

Each word wrings blood from my torn heart.

LADY WILTSHIRE.

In truth,

There never lived who could refuse thee ought ;

For thou wert never known to ask amiss.

But, thou 'rt all tears.

QUEEN.

Nought—nought—thy story, Mother.

LADY WILTSHIRE.

Ay, nothing sure will chase away thy weakness,

Be 't of the body or the mind, so soon

As that sweet consciousness that thou art using

The power Heaven gave thee in Heaven's cause. His

Grace

The Primate waits without t' implore your Highness,

That the old high-born Prior of the Carthusians,

And two right noble brethren of that house,

That, obstinate and self will'd, still subscribe not

The rainbow o'er the awful throne. The King,  
That lives but in thy presence, ne'er disdain'd  
Thy righteous supplication. Oh ! great Queen,  
Our cause, the Gospel cause, the cause of Christ,  
Is spotted o'er with shame. Rude sacrilege  
Usurps the name of godly Reformation,  
And revels in the spoil of shrine and altar.  
Men have cast down the incensed heathenish image  
To worship with more foul idolatry  
The gold of which 'twas wrought ; and all the blood  
The too relentless Law for Treason sheds,  
Attaints our blameless faith of direst cruelty.

QUEEN (*aside*).

More woe, more woe—to know these holy hopes,  
This noble trust, misplaced and frustrate all !  
Your Grace o'ervalues our poor influence,  
Such as it is.

LADY WILTSHIRE.

The King !

QUEEN.

I'll know the worst.

Dear Mother, leave us. Come contempt or shame,  
She must not witness it: but he the rather  
Will seek to compensate the heart's deep wrongs  
By outward graciousness. Wretch, wretch myself,  
I may relieve the wretchedness of others:—  
Be't as it may, the world shall never know  
Through me the secret of his sin, his falsehood,  
But deem him by my love the gentlest husband  
As the most noble Monarch upon Earth.

*KING HENRY.*

KING.

Refuse our mandate—shut their Abbey gates  
Against our Poursuivants—refuse our oaths—  
Now, by St. Paul, not one of them shall wear  
His shaven crown on his audacious shoulders!



CRANMER.

Your Majesty will hear your faithful servant.

KING.

I'll none of it—their heads or their allegiance.

God's death ! have all our Parliament and Peers,

Our Rev'rend Bishops, given their hands and seals,

And shall we thus be mocked and set at nought

By beggarly and barefoot monks? Archbishop,

Out of our love to thine own reverend person,

We do refuse thy most unwise petition.

Good foolish man, not one of them but urged

By that old Priest of the Seven Hills would burn us,

Body and soul. We'll have no Kings but one,

None but ourself.—Tut, not a word. How now?

What, Nan? what blank? what all a mort? Thy jests,

And thy quaint sayings, and thy smiles——

QUEEN.

My Liege,

I have been sued to be a suppliant

For those that, fall'n beneath thine high displeasure——

KING.

'Sdeath ! ye've our answer—as I pass'd but now  
Jane Seymour was set on t' entreat our mercy ;  
We yielded not, nor thought of being wearied  
At every step with the old tedious tale—  
Art answer'd ?

QUEEN.

What I am, I owe your Grace,  
And in most deep humility confess it ;  
But being as I am, your Grace's wife,  
I knew not that my maid's rejected prayer  
Precluded further speech——

KING.

Why, how now, wayward !  
Your maid ! good truth, Sir Thomas Boleyn's daughter's  
Right nobly served. I'd have you know, proud woman,  
What the King gives, the King may take away—  
Who raised up one from dust, may raise another.  
Look to thyself, I say—thou may'st have cause ;  
Look, and be wise—be humble. For your Grace

We've business in our Council—not a word—  
Our Queen's our subject still.

QUEEN (*alone*).

And this is he,  
The flower of the world's chivalry, most courtly  
Where met the splendor of all courts! When Europe  
Sent its three Sov'reigns to that Golden field,  
Which won all eyes with liberal noble bearing?  
Which charm'd all ears with high and gracious speech?  
Which made all hearts his slaves by inbred worth  
But English Henry? by his pattern all  
Moved, spoke, rode, tilted, shaped their dress, their  
language,  
And he that most resembled England's King  
Was kingliest in the esteem of all. This he  
That lay whole hours before my worshipp'd feet,  
Making the air melodious with his words?  
So fearful to offend, having offended  
So fearful of his pardon, not myself  
More jealous of my maiden modesty;

The bridegroom of my youth, my infant's Father !  
Ah ! me, my rash and inconsiderate speech,  
My pride, hath wrought from his too hasty nature  
This shame upon mine head : he'll turn, he'll come  
My prodigal back to mine heart—if not,  
I'm born his subject, sworn before high Heaven  
His faithful wife ; then let him cast me from him,  
Spurn, trample me to dust—the foe, the stranger  
That owns no law of kindred, blood, or duty,  
Is taught, where every word is Heaven's own oracle,  
To love where most he's hated. I will live  
On the delicious memory of the past,  
And bless him so for my few years of bliss,  
My lips shall find no time for harsh reproach ;  
I'll be as one of those sweet flowers, that crush'd  
By the contemptuous foot, winds closer round it,  
And breathes in every step its richest odours.

*An Apartment in Westminster.**ANGELO, LADY ROCHFORD.*

ANGELO.

In that proud Prelate's heart a noble chord <sup>(2)</sup>  
I touch'd, now harp we on a baser string.  
The Lady Rochford ! thou art here to tell me  
That thou fulfill'st the terms on which the Church,  
In its high plenitude of power, absolves  
The guilty soul.

LADY ROCHFORD.

I come, Sir, to advise  
With your wise sanctity.

ANGELO.

We've judged already,  
And look but for obedience—hast thou scatter'd  
Those hints and seeds of hate in the King's path,  
That he behold this Queen in her true colours ?

LADY ROCHFORD.

I have ; with zeal so fatal, with success  
So manifest, mine inmost soul recoils  
At the base service.

ANGELO.

Hast obtain'd that paper  
In Lady Wingfield's hand ?

LADY ROCHFORD.

'Tis here.

ANGELO.

Good ! good !—

LADY ROCHFORD.

Inexorable !—must I show no mercy ?  
Must crime be still atoned by crime ? Oh ! think,  
She is my husband's sister —his, the bridegroom  
Of my fond youth——

ANGELO.

To whom thou art so true  
And faithful !

LADY ROCHFORD.

Ha ! what need of words to thee,  
That read'st the inmost depths of this dark heart  
More clearly than myself—I hate that husband,  
For that I've injured him so deeply ; hate  
Her virtue that reproaches mine own shame :  
But yet to slander her pure fame——

ANGELO.

You said  
Erewhile you doubted her yourself.

LADY ROCHFORD.

The sinful  
Have a base interest to drag down the holy  
To their own level. Set me some strange penance,  
Shall grind the flesh, and wring the heart's-blood forth ;  
Oh ! any thing but this base wicked service !

ANGELO.

Thou wilt do all but what the Church commands.  
What is it for a life like thine—a life  
That doth confess, bewail, forswear its sins,

But with new zest t'indulge—that com'st so oft  
With the foul tale, that I do fear to breathe  
The tainted air of my confessional?  
For such a life is not that place ordain'd  
Where air is fire, life pain, and language howling?

LADY ROCHFORD.

Oh! horror!

ANGELO.

Look that thou perform our bidding  
To the strict letter, the extremest point,  
Wary and secret, as becomes a servant  
Would merit grace and favour.

LADY ROCHFORD.

I'm no servant—  
A slave—a lash'd, a crouching, abject slave,  
In the iron bondage of my sins!

ANGELO.

Ungrateful!  
When I might hurl thee, black with malediction,  
Where all thy direst visions of remorse,



The racking moments of remember'd crime,  
The fangs of Conscience tearing at thy heart,  
Thy tossing, feverish, spectre-staring midnights,  
Would seem remission, peace, delight to years  
Interminable——

LADY ROCHFORD.

Oh ! my soul ! my soul !

ANGELO.

And I have taught thee how to merit favour  
From those to whom the eternal keys are given—  
Tinged your black desperation with the hue  
Of hope——Away ! back to thy duty—watch !  
And those who weigh in the everlasting scales  
Service against rebellion, and obedience  
Against transgression, may at length strike down  
The balance, and pronounce thee what thou dar'st not—  
Thou dost not—hope may be thy lot.—Away !

*The Garden, as before.**MARK SMEATON, MAGDALENE SMEATON.*

MAGDALENE.

My brother !

MARK.

Oh ! her voice—it will not cease—  
It sounds within my ears, within my heart.  
And thou, my harp once loved, but now a treasure  
Which kingdoms will not buy ; of her sweet tones  
Thou 'lt keep the perfume, as the Arabian air  
The smell of spices.

MAGDALENE.

Mark, thou 'rt strangely moved ;  
Speak to me—keep from her no jealous secret,  
From her who loves thee with so whole a heart :  
Nor thy unkindness, were 't in thy soft nature—  
Nor sorrows, they would but endear thee more—

Nor even thy sins, if that way I could fear thee—  
Could e'er estrange——

MARK.

The Queen ! the Queen ! my sister :  
She sent for me—she made me sit before her.  
As my hand trembled on my lute, she smiled  
With gracious playfulness—oh ! what a store  
Of precious memories I 've treasured up—  
Look, motion, word, like relics, have I shrined them  
In the heart's sanctuary, where all my thoughts  
Shall come in daily pilgrimage devout  
Till I am dust and clay. I miserable,  
With such a refuge ! sinful, with the power  
Of her controlling holiness about me !

MAGDALENE.

Oh ! brother, brother, my misgiving heart  
Recoils, it knows not why, from words that sound  
Like dangerous profanation : I have forsworn  
All love but that which cloister'd nuns may feel  
Before the bleeding crucifix ; but yet

I feel that there is sin in thy wild language,  
Sin, not less deep in thought because in deed  
Impossible.—Lo ! Father Angelo.

MARK.

This awful man again !—must we ne'er meet  
But his appalling look, inscrutable  
Yet scrutinizing all, must cite to judgment  
Each passing thought, each word, each wish——

MAGDALENE.

Mark, Mark,

Do any but the guilty dread the presence  
Of holiest men ? He comes to visit here  
The mother of my youth, whose outcast age  
Hath none but me, of all our scatter'd convent,  
To smooth her dying pillow, watch her wants ;  
And none but Father Angelo t' attend her,  
So constantly as though no soul but hers  
Needed his zealous function.

ANGELO. *The above.*

ANGELO.

So, fair youth,  
Our prophecies fall true—thou 'rt i' the sunshine.  
Last eve, I ask not, if the dangerous song  
Beseem'd a son of Holy Church—that sin  
Be theirs not thine.

MARK.

How knew he this?

ANGELO.

Had those  
That take in charge th' eternal souls of men  
No ways of knowledge to the vulgar eye  
Inscrutable, our task were ill fulfill'd.  
So tell me, youth, and look that thou speak truth,  
Truth to the word, the letter, even the tone—  
Fell no peculiar private passages,  
Nor word, nor sign, nay, nor familiar motion,

Emphatic tone, nor more expressive pause,  
Between thyself and the Queen's Grace?

MARK.

Good Sir,

'Think on my baseness and her state——

ANGELO.

So young

And so dishonest! Boy, look to't! Thy soul,  
Thy soul that lives in bliss or dies for ever,  
Is on the hazard (but I speak in love,  
And not in anger) spake she not more gently?  
Glanced not her eye more kindly than 'twas wont?  
Drank not her ears thy songs with longer rapture?  
Awes not her presence less, and charms the more?—  
Boy, boy, take heed—be warn'd, be wise.

MARK.

Sir, Sir,

Is't possible, in human nature! where,  
In History or Legend, wild and marvellous,  
Is't written, that a Queen—a Queen like her—

The Queen of Queens in beauty and in goodness,  
Stoop'd to consider one like me?

ANGELO.

This life

Hath strange vicissitudes. This Queen, this partner  
Of England's throne, I can remember well  
The Duchess of Alençon once esteem'd  
Of note scarce higher in her royal court  
Than thou in England's—so, once more, beware.  
There is no price man's enemy will not pay  
For one immortal soul. Now, the good Abbess—  
Daughter, advance—how fares it with your charge?

MAGDALENE.

Sir, longing for your presence, as the blind  
For light: your holy words breathe deeper calmness  
O'er all her frame, than medicine's opiate drugs;  
Her only fear of death is lest she want  
Your parting benediction.

ANGELO.

In—I'll follow.

MARK.

Will he not warn me not to wing the air,  
Lest I should fly too near the parching Sun,  
And shrivel into dust?—To doubt his wisdom  
Were to impeach man's general estimate;  
T'arraign his charity would give the lie  
To a whole life of painful sanctity,  
And slur th' anointed Priesthood with contempt.  
Yet her—of her to speak, to think, t' imagine  
Less than the purest, chastest, holiest, best—  
An Angel by Heaven's providence unplumed,  
Lest, weary of this tainting world, she fly  
Untimely to her native skies; and I,  
A poor, unknown, a homeless, friendless boy——

The more I think the wilder grow my thoughts,  
And every thought is stamp'd with her bright image;  
She is my world of fantasy, each sound  
Is as her voice, each gleam of light her look,  
And midnight hath no vision but of her.



*Whitehall.*

*QUEEN and Ladies,*

*SIR HENRY NORREYS, SIR FRANCIS WESTON, SIR  
WILLIAM BRERETON, MARK SMEATON.*

NORREYS.

Your Majesty will grace the tilt to-day ?

QUEEN.

The King so wills it: mine obedience rather  
Than mine own humour sways my choice.

NORREYS.

I had dared  
To hope that he, your Grace has deign'd to name  
Your Knight, being Champion of the ring, your Highness  
Had given him victory by your presence.

QUEEN.

Norreys,

Trust me, I wish thee all that proud success  
Thy valour and thy truth deserve.

NORREYS

That wish  
Is triumph—and my vaunting adversaries  
Are strewn already at my feet.

QUEEN.

Sir Henry,  
This language breathes of the blithe air of France ;  
It brings back recollections of my youth,  
When all my life was like a jocund dream,  
Or air of gayest music :—but, time presses—  
So, Gentlemen, in the old Knightly phrase,  
Go bear you bravely for your Mistress' sake.

WESTON.

Our Mistress thus commanding, what true Knight  
Can fail or falter.

QUEEN.

Courteous words, Sir Francis ;  
But I mistake me or that name calls up  
Another—and, in truth, a fairer lady.

WESTON.

Not—as I live.

QUEEN.

Take heed ! false oath, false Knight :

Enough of this—

NORREYS.

We kiss your Highness' hands,

And with this talisman of strength set forth.

QUEEN.

Heaven prosper you !

[MARK SMEATON *kneels also*.

How now ? thou 'rt over-bold :

Thou dost forget thy rank and station, youth ;

Thou 'rt not, I deem, of gentle blood.

MARK.

No, no,

A look suffices me.

QUEEN.

Truth, noble Sirs,

Your gallantry 's infectious ; this poor youth  
Must need admire and imitate your courtesies :  
Take heed that thou offend no more—be modest,  
As thou wert wont. And now to horse, Sir Knights—  
Go forward, and Heaven speed the brave and noble !

So now to Greenwich, to look gay and light  
As this May morning, with a heart as heavy  
As dull November ; to be thought the happiest,  
Be the most wretched of all womankind.

*[Exeunt.]*

*Near Whitehall.*

*GARDINER and ANGELO.*

ANGELO.

My Lord of Winchester—thou 'st seen the King?

GARDINER.

I've seen a raging madman loose; he came  
From Greenwich at full speed; their horses seem'd  
Like those who ride for life from a lost battle:—  
What hath befallen?

ANGELO.

The game is won ere played!  
It fires beyond our hopes, the sulphurous train  
Flames up, they're hurl'd aloft, but not to Heaven.  
Wake, Hell! and lift thy gates; and ye, that tenant  
The deepest, darkest, most infuriate pit,  
Th' abyss of all abysses, blackest blackness,  
Where that most damning sin, the damning others,  
With direst, most remorseless expiation,

Howls out its drear eternity, arouse  
 The myriad voices of your wailing ; loud  
 As when the fleshly Luther, or the chief  
 Of his cursed crew have one by one gone down  
 To tread your furnace chambers !—Rise ! prepare  
 The throne of fire, the crown of eating flames !  
 She comes—the Queen, the fatal Queen, whose beauty  
 Hath been to England worse, more full of peril,  
 Than Helen's was to Troy, hath seal'd for death,  
 For death eternal, irremediable,  
 Whole generations of her godless sons,  
 And made her stately church a heap of ruin !

GARDINER.

I am no heretic : why keep me thus  
 Upon the rack ?

ANGELO.

When slightest accidents  
 Lead to effects that change the doom of nations,  
 Dost thou not read the visible hand of Heaven ?

GARDINER.

Who questions it ?

ANGELO.

Why then behold—adore it !

My Lord, we 're wise and politic, but yet

A foolish kerchief falling to the ground

Shall more advance our high and righteous cause

'Than months of subtlest craft.

GARDINER.

Explain.

ANGELO.

I stood

Within the tilt-yard, not to take delight

Carnal, unpriestly, in the worldly pageant :

Though, Heaven forgive me ! when the trumpets blew,

And the lists fell, and Knights as brave, and full

Of valour as their steeds of fire, wheel'd forth,

And moved in troops or single, orderly

As youths and maidens in a village dance,

Or shot, like swooping hawks, in straight career ;

The old Caraffa rose within my breast—  
Struggled my soul with haughty recollections  
Of when I rode through the outpour'd streets of Rome,  
Enamouring all the youth of Italy  
With envy of my noble horsemanship.  
But I rebuked myself, and thought how Heaven  
Had taught me loftier mastery, to rein  
And curb with salutary governance  
Th' unmanaged souls of men. But to our purpose ;  
Even at the instant, when all spears were levell'd,  
And rapid as the arblast bolt, the Knights  
Spurr'd one by one to the ring, when breathless leant  
The Ladies from their galleries—from the Queen's  
A handkerchief was seen to fall ; but while  
Floating it dallied on the air, a Knight,  
Sir Henry Norreys, as I learnt, stoop'd down,  
Caught, wreath'd it in his plume, regain'd his spear,  
And smote right home the quivering ring : th' acclaim  
Burst forth like roaring waters, but the King



Sprang up, and call'd to horse, while tumult wild  
Broke up the marr'd and frightened ceremony.

## GARDINER.

Something of this I augur'd : as the King  
Swept furious by, he beckon'd me ; yet seem'd  
Too busied with his wrathful thoughts to heed  
Whom thus he summon'd ; and I heard him mutter  
“ The saucy groom ! ” and terms, which to repeat  
Were not o'erfitting priestly lips, but coupled  
With the Queen's name most strangely. Seeing this,  
I thought it in mine office to administer  
Grave ghostly admonition, mingled well  
With certain homily and pulpit phrases  
Of man's ingratitude, and gracious Kings  
Whose bounties are abused ; the general looseness  
Of the age. The more I spake, the more he madden'd,  
As though my words were oil on fire.

## ANGELO.

'Twas well,  
But must be better ; I have further tidings.

I pass'd the Tower, and saw Sir William Kingston,  
Summon'd, 'twas said, with special haste, come forth  
Among his archers.

GARDINER.

Ha ! there 's more in this.

ANGELO.

Prelate, there shall be—where 's the King ?

GARDINER.

I left him

Near the apartment of Jane Seymour.

ANGELO.

Good !

The field of battle where we have them all  
At vantage.—Lead me to him.

GARDINER.

Thee ?

ANGELO.

What ! jealous still ? Then go thyself—be speedy.  
Thou lovest the King, my Lord of Winchester :  
Suits it thy reverence, then, and holy station,

Nearest his bosom, in his closest counsels,  
That he retain a wanton in his bosom,  
When there is one hath damning evidence  
At peril of his life ?

GARDINER.

Where ? who ?

ANGELO.

The Man

Am I.—Thou see'st, my Lord, thine all the glory,  
The gratitude for this great service—mine  
The peril. Strike, strike now, strike home, my Lord.

GARDINER.

I see it : as we pass, thou shalt unfold  
All that remains behind ; and, trust me, Brother,  
Thou shalt have thy reward.

ANGELO.

I shall—in Heaven.

*Whitehall.*

## QUEEN.

What can it mean? Each face as I pass'd by  
Was gathering blackness; and a silent pity  
Sate upon brows that turn'd aside to avoid me.  
The menials are infected: not a groom,  
As I descended from my litter, lent  
His hand to aid me; and my anti-rooms  
Are mute and empty, even as though the plague  
Had tainted all the air. Well, what of this?—  
Oh, God of Grace! thou'rt bounteous still! Fall off  
The cumbrous trappings and appendages  
Of mine uneasy state, thou leav'st me yet  
One far too old and one too young to change:  
My child, my Mother, and my Innocence,  
Shall make me up a blest society,  
An Empress girt about with handmaid-queens

Might envy.—At her charge I left my Mother,  
Her charge, whose joy renews her youth, and makes her  
Like some fond nurse o'er her first born——

*LADY WILTSHIRE.*

LADY WILTSHIRE.

Come, come,

She sleeps—thyself, dear Anne, not half so lovely :  
Come sit by her, and gaze on her, for hours,  
For days : a violet on a bed of snow,  
A pearl in ivory set, the brightest star  
Where all are bright in the soft milky way—  
There's no similitude she doth not shame.  
Her forehead arch'd by Heaven to fit a crown !  
I've almost wish'd thou ne'er shouldst bear a boy,  
Dear Anne, to bar her from the throne she's born to.

QUEEN.

Mother, I follow thee.

*The above. KINGSTON and GUARD.*

QUEEN.

Ha ! in my chamber  
Arm'd men ! Sir William Kingston, thou'rt o'er bold  
To press unbidden on our privacy.

KINGSTON.

By the King's special mandate, I attach  
Your Highness.

QUEEN.

Stay, Sir, as you hope for mercy.  
My mother ! she is old and fond—her heart  
Will break. Dear Mother—back—go back—the King,  
Willing to do your daughter honour, sends  
Good Kingston and his guard. God pardon me !  
The first untruth that e'er defiled my lips.  
Now, Sir, your message : the King's Grace, I heard,  
In his displeasure for some weighty cause,  
Commands his Queen to prison ; I obey, Sir.

KINGSTON.

Your Majesty must hold yourself in readiness  
T' imbark on the instant for the Tower.

QUEEN.

The Tower !

Oh, mother ! mother ! that the time should come  
When I should wish thee in thy quiet grave.  
My child—that I should wish thee yet unborn ;—  
Shall I find justice, Sir ? <sup>(3)</sup>

KINGSTON.

The meanest subject  
In all the realm would not impeach the equity  
Of the King's Grace with such a dangerous doubt.  
*[Queen bursts into laughter.]*  
Your Highness !

QUEEN.

Start ye thus to see me laugh ?  
There's laughter that is grief's most bitter language,  
Laughter that hath no mirth—and such is mine.  
Lieutenant of the Tower, I tell thee this :

I've done, Sir, in my days, some good, through Christ ;  
If they misjudge my cause, yea, but a jot,  
The fiery indignation from above  
Shall blast the bosom of this land, the skies  
Shall be as brass, nor rain nor drop of dew  
Shall moisten the adust and gaping carth.

KINGSTON.

I would besecch your Highness to compose  
Your too distemper'd mind.

QUEEN.

Where are the Bishops,  
The holy Bishops? They will plead my cause,  
And make my enemies kneel at my footstool.  
I needs must laugh, Sir, but I'll weep anon,  
Weep floods, weep life blood, weep till every heart  
Shall ache and burst to see me. Now I'll kneel—  
Behold me kneel!—and imprecate Heaven's vengeance  
If I'm not guiltless. Come—away—away—  
Is your barge ready? Sooner to my judgment,  
Sooner to my deliverance.—So, back  
To those I dare not name, I dare not think of.



*The Garden as before.*

*ANGELO, MARK SMEATON.*

ANGELO.

Good youth, I know not if it grieve me more,  
Thy fair preferment thus is nipp'd i' the bud,  
Or give me joy that thou hast 'scaped the snares  
That might have limed thy soul.

MARK.

Is it then true, Sir?

Is 't possible? Thou art all truth, thou wilt not  
Torture my heart with such a hideous falsehood.  
There was a rude tall fellow with a halberd,  
Who spake of it, and with his villainous jests  
And fiendish laughter tainted the Queen's name,  
Her snowy, spotless, air-embalming name!  
I told him to his teeth he lied; and if

His scoffing fellows had not troop'd around him,  
I'd struck him to the earth.

ANGELO.

Rash boy, beware !

'This sounds like treason.

MARK.

If the King himself  
Set such example to high heaven, cast off  
Its richest bounties with such insolent scorn,  
What wonder if ingratitude become  
The fashion of his court, and the most favour'd  
Change to the blackest traitors ?

ANGELO.

Mark, 'tis true

The Queen is order'd prisoner to the Tower—  
Most true ; yet know'st thou not the worst : the King  
Has changed to such a deadly hate against her,  
That she must die —

MARK.

Die ! die !—No, Sir, no soul

Will load itself with such a deep damnation :  
Earth would break out in execration, Heaven  
With unexampled thunders interdict  
The horrible sentence !

ANGELO.

Youth, I'll trust thee farther.  
Come hither, close—thy love to thy lost mistress  
Warrants my somewhat dangerous confidence :  
She stands between the King and a new lust—  
He must be widow'd, e'er his guilty heart  
Glut its foul appetite.

MARK.

Oh ! reverend Father,  
Does not thy flesh grow cold, thy holy heart  
Sicken still more and more at this bad world ?  
For me, for me, she will so hallow death—  
She will so darken and make void this earth  
At her departure—I and all true servants  
Will seek out our untimely graves, to attend,

Adore her, in a better world ; at least,  
Not live in this, when sunless of her presence.

ANGELO.

Now, as a heretic I love her not,  
But yet my charity would not she were cast,  
Where she must perish body and soul in hell ;  
I'd have her live—live on, in shame and sorrow ;  
For sorrow is the mother of true penitence.

MARK.

Is there no way to save her ?

ANGELO.

None.

MARK.

Then, farewell

All hope, all joy in this world's wilderness,  
A barren waste of sand, the fountain dried  
That was its life and gladness.—

ANGELO.

None, but that

At which our nature shudders, that would damn

The name to blackest branded infamy,  
Would peril the eternal soul, would give  
The fiends such awful vantage, by a crime,  
A wilful crime, so like th' accursed Judas,  
That good men would not stay to seek the cause,  
But heap the head with merciless execration.  
Where shall we find, in these degenerate days,  
Devotion more than Roman?—Who will risk  
His fame, his soul, to save a woman's life,  
And give a heretic time to pluck the brand  
Of her lost soul out of hell fire?

MARK.

Good Father,  
Wrap not thy speech in darkness.

ANGELO.

If the King,  
On some just plea (and these new Gospellers  
Do admit none but foul adultery)  
Were but divorced—how long, how honourably  
Liv'd the Imperial Catherine!—which were best—

Her spotless name be tainted, or her body  
Writhe on a scaffold, and her soul in flames?

MARK.

Horrible ! horrible !—to live with name  
Spotted with shame, or die for aye !—

ANGELO.

E'en so—

To bear a branded life, nor maid, nor widow,  
Nor wife ; for who would wed a tainted outcast ?  
She were beneath the lowest groom.

MARK.

True, true.

On, I beseech you, Sir.

ANGELO.

Do we not force  
The deadliest poison down the best-lov'd lips,  
If, by its wholesome intervention, life  
Be prison'd in the mortal frame ? We hate  
At first the stern physician, but erewhile  
The wiser heart o'erflows with grateful love.

MARK.

Good reverend Sir, tell me at once—directly,  
With no prudential riddling in thy phrase,  
What must he do would save the Queen?

ANGELO.

Avouch,

And with a solemn oath, in the face of Heaven,  
That they have done together that foul sin  
That taints the lips to speak, the heart to think on.

MARK.

Oh! but 't must be a nobler perjury.  
Who would believe th' impossible falsity  
Averr'd by baser lips?

ANGELO.

Those that would fain  
Believe, are ne'er o'er-nice or scrupulous.

MARK.

Too much at once, with falsehood to blaspheme  
Such goodness, on this side of Heaven unknown,  
And be a base and perjured wretch!

ANGELO.

The Church,

On meet occasion—and what cause more noble  
Than possible redemption of a soul  
Like hers, sold captive to the heretic crew?—  
Hath power to absolve the guilt of falsest oaths.

MARK.

Dost say so?

ANGELO.

Oh! that soft luxurious neck  
Bare on the cold dark block to lie, the axe  
Come gleaming down with horrid expedition—

MARK.

I'll do't——

ANGELO.

Thou! soft and timorous boy!

MARK.

I'll do't

If fiends stand plucking at my soul, and Hell  
Yawn at my feet! Thou, Father, thou wilt case



My soul in adamantine resolution.

I 'll save her, if I die, on earth—for ever !

Do with me as thou wilt—I 'll speak, I 'll swear,

I 'll pull down good men's imprecations, Heaven's—

No, Heaven will pardon if I save the heavenly !

Upon my head rain curses, contumelies,

She will erewhile be taught to bless me ; ways

Will sure be found to teach her why I 've dared

Thus 'gainst my nature, bold and false—she 'll know it,

She 'll know it all—my pains, my hopes, my truth !—

*ANNE BOLEYN landing at the Tower.*

*SIR WILLIAM KINGSTON, Guards.*

QUEEN.

Here—here, then, all is o'er!—Oh! awful walls,  
Oh! sullen towers, relentless gates, that open  
Like those of Hell, but to receive the doom'd,  
The desperate—Oh! ye black and massy barriers,  
But broken by yon barr'd and narrow loopholes,  
How do ye coop from this, God's sunshine world  
Of freedom and delight, your world of woe,  
Your midnight world, where all that live, live on  
In hourly agony of death! Vast dungeon,  
Populous as vast, of your devoted tenants!  
Long ere our bark had touch'd the fatal strand,  
I felt your ominous shadows darken o'er me,  
And close me round; your thick and clammy air,

As though 'twere loaded with dire imprecations,  
Wailings of dying and of tortured men,  
Tainted afar the wholesome atmosphere.

KINGSTON (*to the Guard*).

Advance your halberds.

QUEEN.

Oh ! Sir, pause—one look,  
One last long look, to satiate all my senses.  
Oh ! thou blue cloudless canopy. just tinged  
With the faint amber of the setting sun,  
Where one by one steal forth the modest stars  
To diadem the sky :—thou noble river,  
Whose quiet ebb, not like my fortune, sinks  
With gentle downfall, and around the keels  
Of those thy myriad barks mak'st passing music :—  
Oh ! thou great silent city, with thy spires  
And palaces, where I was once the greatest,  
The happiest—I, whose presence made a tumult  
In all your wondering streets and jocund marts :—  
But most of all, thou cool and twilight air,

That art a rapture to the breath ! The slave,  
The beggar, the most base down-trodden outcast,  
The plague-struck livid wretch, there's none so vile,  
So abject, in your streets, that swarm with life—  
They may inhale the liquid joy Heaven breathes—  
They may behold the rosy evening sky—  
They may go rest their free limbs where they will :  
But I—but I, to whom this summer world  
Was all bright sunshine ; I, whose time was noted  
But by succession of delights——Oh ! Kingston,  
Thou dost remember, thou wert then Lieutenant,  
'Tis now—how many years?—my memory wanders—  
Since I set forth from yon dark low-brow'd porch,  
A bride—a monarch's bride—King Henry's bride !  
Oh ! the glad pomp, that burn'd upon the waters—  
Oh ! the rich streams of music that kept time  
With oars as musical—the people's shouts,  
That call'd Heaven's blessings on my head, in sounds  
That might have drown'd the thunders——I've more  
    need  
Of blessing now, and not a voice would say it.

KINGSTON.

Your Grace, no doubt, will long survive this trial.

QUEEN.

Sir, Sir, it is too late to flatter me :

Time was I trusted each fond possibility,

For hope sate queen of all my golden fortunes ;

But now——

KINGSTON.

Day wears, and our imperious mandate  
Brooks no delay—advance.

QUEEN.

Back, back, I say !—

I will not enter ! Whither will ye plunge me ?  
Into what chamber, but the sickly air  
Smells all of blood—the black and cobweb'd walls  
Are all o'ertraced by dying hands, who 've noted  
In the damp dews indelible their tale  
Of torture—not a bed nor straw-laid pallet  
But bears th' impression of a wretch call'd forth  
To execution. Will ye place me there,

Where those poor babes, their crook-back'd uncle murder'd,

Still haunt?—Inhuman hospitality!

Look there! look there! fear mantles o'er my soul

As with a prophet's robe, the ghostly walls

Are sentinel'd with mute and headless spectres,

Whose lank and grief-attenuated fingers

Point to their gory and dissever'd necks,

The least a lordly noble, some like princes:

Through the dim loopholes gleam the haggard faces

Of those, whose dark unutterable fate

Lies buried in your dungeons' depths; some wan

With famine, some with writhing features fix'd

In the agony of torture.—Back! I say:

They beckon me across the fatal threshold,

Which none may pass and live.

KINGSTON.

The deaths of traitors,

If such have died within these gloomy towers,

Should not appal your Grace with such vain terrors;

The chamber is prepared where slept your Highness  
When last within the Tower.

QUEEN.

Oh ! 'tis too good  
For such a wretch—a death-doom'd wretch as me.  
My Lord, my Henry—he that call'd me forth  
Even from that chamber, with a voice more gentle  
Than flutes o'er calmest waters—will not wrong  
Th' eternal Justice—the great law of Kings !  
Let him arraign me—bribe as witnesses  
The angels that behold our inmost thoughts,  
He'll find no crime but loving him too fondly ;  
And let him visit that with his worst vengeance.  
Come, Sir, your wearied patience well may fail :  
On to that chamber, where I slept so sweetly,  
When guiltier far than now. On—on, good Kingston.

*Whitehall.*

*KING HENRY and Attendants.*

KING.

'Sdeath ! ye 're all traitors : the King's bed defiled,  
And by his grooms, and ye must pause and parley  
For proof and witness ! Find me demonstration,  
Or I 'll be law, witness, and judge. A King  
Not to cast off a wanton from his bed,  
But must be trammel'd, thwarted, check'd, control'd  
By quirks of law, old formal statutes, rolls  
Of parchment scribbled o'er with musty phrases !  
I 'll let you know our will 's this kingdom's law.  
Where 's Norreys ?

ATTENDANT.

He awaits your Highness' pleasure.



KING.

Come hither, Norreys : we have loved, have trusted you—  
Could ye find out no nobler way than this  
Of being a traitor ? could your daring lust  
Stoop to no humbler paramour than our Queen ?

NORREYS.

Your pardon, Sire, but save your Highness' presence,  
Show me the man dare taint my name with treason,  
I'd dash my gauntlet in his face, and choke  
Th' audacious lie within his venomous throat.  
And more, excepting still my Liege's person,  
Whoe'er hath slander'd the Queen's honour, be it  
With me, or Knight far worthier of her favour,  
I do defy that man to mortal battle,  
Body to body, as a Knight—I'll prove him  
The most convicted, recreant, foulest slanderer,  
Whose breath e'er soil'd a Lady's spotless name !

KING.

Thou hast done us service, Norreys ; for that reason,  
Though we impeach our honour by our mercy,

Confess, if treacherous opportunity  
Or her too easy virtue did allure thee,  
(For in the heat and wild distemperature  
Of passion, noblest souls forget themselves).  
Be bold, be dauntless, but be true: we pledge  
The honour of a King, to give thee back  
Thy forfeit life; for look ye, she shall die—  
She and her minions!—Stand thou forth our witness,  
Perchance, beside thy life, our grace may find  
Some meet return.

## NORREYS.

I do beseech your Highness,  
What act of mine in all my life avouches  
The slanderous hope, to buy or life, or what  
I value more, my Sov'reign's gracious favour,  
I'd perjure mine own soul, accuse the blameless?  
My Liege, you are abused—fouly abused!  
Some devil hath beset your easy ear.  
If you strike off this unoffending head,  
Your Majesty will lose a faithful servant—

That's soon replaced ; but for the Queen, I say,  
 And will maintain it with my life, the best,  
 The chastest Queen, the closest nun in Europe,  
 Is Messalina to a Vestal——

KING.

Off !

Away with him to the Tower.—What ! have we stoop'd  
 Thus to be gracious, to be scorn'd and rated,  
 And by our slaves ?

*The above. WINCHESTER.*

KING.

Why how now, Winchester ?  
 Another Churchman come t' impeach his King,  
 And with mock charitable incredulity  
 Arraign his justice ? I'd but now a missive  
 From Cranmer ;—he, forsooth, good blameless man,  
 Knowing no sin himself, believes there's none  
 In others.—'Sdeath ! I'll hear no more excuses ;

The fact 's as clear, or shall be, as yon Sun.

Thou think'st her guiltless?

GARDINER.

Till this hour, my Liege,  
I could have pledged my life, sworn strongest oaths  
That such a monstrous sin—a sin that darkens  
The annals of mankind, makes us suspect  
Some moral plague broke out in human nature—  
Had been impossible. Oh! best and greatest,  
That best and greatest to ungrateful men  
Should be a licence thus to wrong the bounties  
By which they lived!—And that the Queen—raised up  
From a Knight's daughter to the throne of England—  
A partner of King Henry's bed—the strange,  
Th' unnatural act doth give itself the lie!  
It doth out argue closest demonstration,  
And make us rather deem our senses traitors  
Than trust the assurance of most damning proofs.

KING.

Ha! proofs!

GARDINER.

Would there were none, my Liege, who bears  
'Tidings of shame to an abused husband,  
That husband too a King, a glorious King—  
Sire, my ungracious presence still will seem  
A base remembrancer of these foul deeds,  
Odious as they——

KING.

Your proofs, good Prelate, proofs.

GARDINER.

Is the confession of the guilty, forced  
By no stern tension of the searching rack,  
Nor laceration of the bleeding flesh,  
But free, unbribed, unsought——

KING.

Ha ! which ?

GARDINER.

My Liege,

'Tis that outdoes all record of old crime,  
Makes true all tales of fabulous wantonness ;

It is the boy—the beardless boy !—Oh ! lust,  
Blind as unbridled, frantic as impure,  
That no discrimination knows, nor choice  
Of base from noble, foul from fair—to fall  
From the allow'd embrace of such a King——

KING.

Now, by St. Paul ! thou wear'st our patience.—Speak,  
How got ye this ? look ye confirm it.

GARDINER.

Sire,

May 't please your Highness, that a holy Friar,  
Albeit I know your Grace for weightiest reasons  
Mistrusts their order, hath perpetual access  
Unto the prisoner Smeaton.

KING.

Ha ! a priest

I' the plot—why then 'tis ripe and pregnant. Gardiner,  
We are bound to thee. My Lord of Winchester,  
Look thou make good this charge against our Queen,  
Or, by St. Paul ! thou shalt have cause to rue it.

So, back to Greenwich ; we'll go hunt the deer !  
Blow horns—yell dogs—we'll have a gorgeous day !  
The Sun is in the Heavens, and our high heart  
Is mounting with him. Off—to horse—to horse.

---

*The Tower.*

QUEEN.

“ Blessed are those that weep.”—Oh ! truth of truths,  
Not understood till felt—thou grace of Heaven,  
Spirit of Christ, thou didst not all forsake me,  
When my whole life was like a banquet—served  
By Pride and Luxury—dangerous cup-bearers.  
Prayers, all unwonted on the dainty couch,  
Where Queens are lapt in purple, fail'd not me ;  
Mine heart, a place forbid to pain or sorrow,

Thou didst incline to other's grief : I read  
In the deep lines of woe-worn cheeks, the bliss  
Of resignation to the Eternal will ;  
And felt, admired, adored the Christian beauty  
Of graces that I had no scope to practise.  
But now, oh Christ ! that thou vouchsafest me  
The mercy of affliction—oh ! the warmth  
Of prayer that burns upon my lips, the deep,  
The full religion that o'erflows my heart.  
My cited thoughts stand ready at my call,  
And undistracted memory ranges o'er  
My map of life—where it is wilderness  
Or weed-o'ergrown, pours streams of penitence ;  
But where the sunshine of Heaven's grace, though cross'd  
By hasty clouds of earthly passion, gleams  
Upon the golden harvest of good deeds,  
It glorifies that Sun in humblest thankfulness.  
Thee, therefore, amiable prison, thee—  
Oh ! Solitude—dreadful in apprehension ;  
When present, to the friendless, the best friend !



Henceforth will I esteem, as much beyond  
The pride and press of courts, as I feel nearer  
To Heaven within you.

*QUEEN, CRANMER.*

QUEEN.

Good my Lord Archbishop,  
I will not wrong thee by the idle question  
Why here? 'Tis sorrow's dwelling, and thou art here  
But in obedience to thy heart and function.

CRANMER.

I come not, Lady, to erect anew  
The much misused Confessional, where Sins  
Best hid in shameful silence, or wrung forth  
In voiceless anguish, to Heaven's midnight ear,  
Are acted o'er again in foul recital:—  
But oh, if thou art fallen, the saintliest pupil  
In our young school of Christian graces, thou  
That to the living fountain of the Gospel

Cam'st duly, to draw forth the eternal waters,  
What infamy will blacken o'er our cause.  
A horror of deep darkness hath oppress'd  
The Church, that waits in awful hope th' event.

QUEEN.

Cranmer, behold this book, my sole companion,  
Yet whose sweet converse makes my prison day  
So short, I 'm fain t' encroach upon the night.  
Sir, were I guilty (and in truth I know  
My crime but vaguely), there's a passage here  
Of one detected in such nameless sin,  
That had been blotted with my scalding tears :  
'Tis stainless, and in truth unread ; nor ask I  
If my accusers are less deep in Sin.  
If I am guilty, let who will cast first  
The avenging stone, and heap the death upon me.

CRANMER.

Heaven's Grace be praised ! but oh ! the obdurate King.

QUEEN.

There's death in thy sad looks : speak, I'll endure it.

He that has placed this cross upon my shoulders  
Will give me strength to bear it. I defy not,  
With boastfulness unfeminine, the shame,  
The agony ; nor yet ungrateful speak  
As weary of a world only too full  
Of joyance. Thou, my child, would'st well rebuke  
Thy mother's selfish soul if she could leave thee  
Without a rending of her heart-strings : thou  
Not less, my mother ! most of all, my husband !  
If unreluctant I could load thy soul  
With the foul crime of my judicial murder ;  
Even our afflicted Church may ill sustain  
The loss of my unworthy aid.

CRANMER.

Oh ! rate not  
Thus low your faithful service : farewell now  
Vain hope, that the whole land should hear the Word  
Of God go forth on all the winds ; no more  
Fatigue the deaf cold Saint with fruitless pray'r,  
Or kiss with pilgrim lips the unheeding shrine :

That not a village, not a silent hamlet  
In mountain solitude, or glen, of traveller  
Untrod, should want its sabbath bell to knoll  
To purest worship: that a holy priesthood,  
Chaste, simple, to themselves alone severe,  
Poor below luxury, rich beyond contempt,  
Environ'd with their heaven-led families,  
Should with their lives most saintly eloquence  
Preach Christ—Christ only:—while all reverend Learning  
In arch'd cathedral cloister, or the grove  
That bosoms deep the calm and thoughtful college,  
Should heavenward meditate, and bring to earth  
The knowledge learnt amid the golden stars.  
But now shall irreligious Avarice  
Pluck from his lips the Scholar's dole—the Temples  
Lie desecrate in ruin—or the night  
Of ancient ignorance and error sink  
On the dark land for ever and for ever.

## QUEEN.

Alas! Sir, why enamour me with life,  
Making me deem myself of value here,

Here in this world, which I must leave?—So young  
To be cut off, and so untimely ! cast  
A blooming branch to the cold grave ! Yet Heaven,  
Whose cause it is, will raise defenders up.  
My child ! my daughter ! oh prophetic soul !  
I dare not trust, yet will not disbelieve  
Thy glorious omens. Good my Lord Archbishop,  
Thou 'lt not endure these knees should grow to earth,  
To less than Heaven ; but I adjure thee, watch  
Her ripening spirit, sow the seed, ne'er lost  
Though cast on the waste waters.

CRANMER.

Heaven but grant  
The life and power !

QUEEN.

T' another subject now,  
My sins, my sins !

CRANMER.

Of them to Christ alone ;—  
That heart bleeds freeliest that inly bleeds.

## QUEEN.

Bear with me yet, my Lord, for I must tax  
Your kindness further. There is one, but one  
In all this world, my memory names, hath cause  
To think of me as of her enemy,  
The Lady Mary ; for a dying woman  
Entreat her pardon. I've a letter here,  
Writt'n to the King with such poor eloquence  
As I am mistress of : beseech thee hear it ;  
Then, if thou wilt, be thou the bearer of it.

*The Letter.* <sup>(4)</sup>

“ Sire, your displeasure and imprisonment  
Are all so strange to me, that what to write  
I know not, what t'excuse : you sent erewhile  
Mine enemy to urge me to confess,  
And so secure your favour ;—willingly,  
If to confess a truth might purchase me  
My ne'er-despised safety—but imagine not  
Your wife will own a sin ne'er soil'd her thoughts.

Never had Prince a wife so loyal—duteous,  
So to affection true, as your Anne Boleyn.  
That name and place had been my life's content,  
God and your Grace so willing it ; yet ne'er  
Forgot I, that the fancy which had raised me,  
Might wander to another fairer object.  
You chose me, nor deserving, nor desiring,  
Your Queen and Partner :—having so honour'd me,  
Good, your Grace, let no light unworthy motive,  
Nor my malicious enemies' false council,  
Withdraw your favour from me, least the stain,  
Th' indelible stain of a disloyal heart,  
Attaint your duteous wife and royal daughter.  
Try me, good King, but with a lawful trial,  
Not with my foes my judges—try me openly ;  
So shall my innocence shine forth as day,  
Your nice and jealous honour be absolved,  
Th' opprobrious voice of the world's slander silenced :  
Or by the undoubted plainness of my guilt,

Your Grace escape all censure of rash harshness,  
And God and man approve th' extremest rigour  
Of vengeance on a lawless wife:—then freely  
Your Grace may follow that your heart's affection,  
Fix'd where I know, but where I may not name.  
But if my death, worse than my death, my shame,  
In your high councils is already doom'd,  
I make my prayer to God to pardon you,  
To blot this most unprincely usage of me  
From your account, when thou and I shall meet  
Before his judgment throne, where I shall stand,  
Judge howsoe'er the world, in saintly whiteness.  
I've but one more request; on me alone,  
If it must fall, fall all thy wrath—Oh! touch not  
The innocent lives of those poor gentlemen  
In prison for my sake. If e'er thy wife  
Found favour in thy sight—if e'er thine ear  
Found music in Anne Boleyn's name—deny not  
This last, this dying prayer. No more I trouble thee.



The Holy Trinity keep your good Grace  
In health, life, happiness, and holiness.

Written from my doleful prison in the Tower,  
Your loyal and most faithful wife, Anne Boleyn."

CRANMER.

God, that can make the marble heart like wax,  
Make this his instrument of grace !

QUEEN.

Amen.

*A Prison in the Tower.*

ANGELO.

ANGELO.

Down, impotent remorse ! temptation, down !  
My soul abjures thee ! and thou, carnal pride,  
That wilt not use the means this world calls base  
For that great end, t' advance the faith of Christ !  
What if the span of some few mortal lives  
Be somewhat shrunk, some eyes untimely closed  
On this world's Sun, will not ten thousand souls  
Live through eternity's unfathom'd years,  
And a whole nation walk in moral light ?  
'Tis but the wise relentlessness of Heaven.  
Doth the dread earthquake feel remorse, that makes  
A populous city one vast tomb, where Guilt  
And Innocence lie side by side ? Does Pity  
Pale the blue cheek of pestilence, that blasts

Whole nations? Doth the sweeping deluge pause,  
 And hold suspended its vast weight of waters,  
 To give the righteous time to fly the ruin?  
 The best, the wisest, holiest Saints and Pontiffs  
 Have sent fierce war with undiscerning vengeance  
 To waste the heretic's land; for though just Heav'n  
 Turn from the field of carnage—from the city  
 Made desolate, far rather it beholds them,  
 Than the fierce tossings of the infernal pit,  
 And Hell made rich with everlasting souls.—  
 Here are but two; one guiltless, and one guilty.  
 On—and be fearless—on, my soul!

He sleeps;

Poor wretch, thou 'lt sleep ere long more deep—he dreams.

MARK, (*in his sleep*).

Her voice—her voice—ye heard her lute-like voice,  
 Who loosed these bonds, who led me forth from death.  
 'Twas I, your servant, I——

Where am I?—who

And what art thou?—The Father Angelo!

Oh ! sleep, sweet sleep, art thou a prophetess,  
Or but a gracious and most kind deceiver ?  
Oh ! palace builder—oh ! thou Queen of bridals,  
That in the silent prison mak'st the bells  
Sound for the jocund marriage—oh ! magician,  
With realm of witchcraft wide as thought—time, place,  
And circumstance, combine, and shift, and change,  
Like spirits on thy sorcerous wand that wait,  
And all things are that are not—night is day,  
Grief joy, death life, th' impossible becomes  
Breathing reality ; thou dost take up  
Th' unpillow'd beggar, and dost proudly seat him  
Upon a throne—dost bring the Queen of queens  
Down to the level of a boy like me.

## ANGELO.

Mark Smeaton, I am here to know thy purpose,  
Thy calm deliberate purpose : yet 'tis time  
To disavow thy dangerous evidence—  
Yet, but not long : I saw the Judges pass  
Across the court, and one that bare an axe

Went first, as to denote they sate in judgment  
Upon a capital crime.

MARK.

Then she must die—  
If by mine oath she is found guilty, who  
Shall intercept that bloody instrument?—

ANGELO.

There has been stir and parleying to and fro  
Concerning a pre-contract, said to exist  
Between the Queen, when young, and the Lord Piercy ;  
And wherefore this, but the relenting King  
Would be content to break the chain asunder  
That galls him.

MARK.

Yet to swear—before high Heaven—  
All seeing Heaven !—Heaven, that in thunder spake  
The stern command, “ Thou shalt not bear false witness !”

ANGELO.

’Tis well :—what is ’t to thee if the fierce King  
Add to his ruthless soul the crime of murder ;

And one unhousel'd heretic more bear down,  
Her soul all leprous with its gangrene taint,  
To burn for endless ages? I had brought  
The deposition, that but wants thy signet  
And oath before some witnesses that wait  
I' the court without—but to the flames with it,  
And to the block with her—not worth the jeoparding  
The immortal spirit——

MARK.

Not worth!—if 'twere but death,  
To go to sleep in the cold grave, and know  
That she walk'd harmless in the living world.  
Oh! Sir, but Hell has some thrice darkest chamber,  
Some outcast dwelling, where the perjured hear  
The hissing and the execration of the damn'd.

ANGELO.

Crime is not crime but in its motive:—thou  
Art false but to be true—false to her fame,  
True to her better interests.—But I came not  
To argue. Yet when thou go'st hence, take heed

Thou pass not o'er the hill where Traitors die ;  
Lest trammel'd in the press, thou 'rt forced to see,  
From first to last, the hideous deed—the stroke,  
The agony, the despair, the writhing hands,  
The sever'd neck, the cry to Heaven, that Heaven  
Shall turn away from, and——

MARK.

Give me the paper ;  
Let me not read it, lest its hideous falsehood  
Shake my faint resolution. There—'tis done !

ANGELO.

What, ho ! within,—ye see this youth deliver  
This instrument as his own deed.

WITNESSES.

We do.

ANGELO.

Now in and sleep again.

MARK.

Sleep !—never more ;  
The perjured do not sleep ; the slanderers, those

That bear false witness—yet Heaven knows, and Heaven  
Will pardon—and she too, like Heaven, will know,  
Like Heaven will pardon ! Sir, I cannot think  
Thou hast deceived me ; if thou hast, the tortures  
Of all eternity will be too short  
T' avenge this wicked subornation !

ANGELO.

Peace !

MARK.

Oh ! pardon, Sir, my thoughts do swim so strangely ;  
Things all so monstrous and incredible  
Have come to pass, there's nought that seems too strange,  
And nothing is but what could never be.  
That thou, a man of such strict saintliness,  
Should'st be so false, finds credit with me only  
Because it is impossible, and far  
Beyond the reach and scope of our belief.



*A Hall in the Tower.*

*DUKE OF NORFOLK, DUKE OF SUFFOLK, MARQUIS EXETER,  
and others as Judges. The QUEEN, and OFFICERS.*

NORFOLK.

Read our commission.

OFFICER.

Thomas Duke of Norfolk,  
The Duke of Suffolk, Marquis Exeter,  
Earl Arundel, and certain other peers  
Here present; ye are met in the Tower of London,  
By special mandate from the King, t'arraign  
Of certain dangerous and capital treasons  
Against the peace and person of the King  
Anne, Queen of England.

CRIER.

Come into the Court  
Anne, Queen of England.

QUEEN.

Here.

OFFICER.

Anne, Queen of England,

(Be seated, it beseems your Grace's station,)

Look on this Court, these peers of England, met,

By the King's high commission, to pass sentence

Between thyself and the King's Grace—hast ought

'T' object ere thou 'rt arraign'd ?

QUEEN.

I'd thought, my Lords,

It had stood more with the King's justice, more

With the usage of the land, a poor weak woman

Had not been forced t' abide your awful ordeal

Alone and unadvised ; that Counsel, learned

In forms of law, and versed by subtle practice

In forcing from the bribed or partial witnesses

Th' unwilling truth, had been assigned me.—Well,

Be't as it is—I have an advocate

Gold cannot fee, nor circumstance appal ;

An advocate, whose voiceless eloquence,  
If it should fail before your earthly court,  
Shall in a higher gain me that acquittal  
Mine enemies' malice may deny me here—  
Mine Innocence. Proceed.

OFFICER.

Anne, Queen of England,  
Thou stand'st arraign'd, that treasonously and foully,  
To the dishonour of his Highness' person  
And slander of his issue, thou hast conspired  
With certain Traitors, now convict and sentenced—  
George, Viscount Rochford, Henry Norreys, Knight,  
Sir William Brereton, Francis Weston, Knights,  
And one Mark Smeaton,——

QUEEN.

Pause, Sir ; heard I rightly  
My Brother's name, Lord Rochford's ? I beseech you,  
My Lords, what part bears he in this Indictment ?

OFFICER.

The same with all the rest.

QUEEN.

Great God of Thunder

Refrain thy bolt!—my Lords, there are among ye  
Have noble Sisters, if ye deem this possible,  
I do consent ye deem it true. Go on, Sir.

OFFICER.

And one Mark Smeaton.

QUEEN.

Would they make me smile  
With iteration of that name—a meet  
And likely lover for King Henry's Queen!

NORFOLK.

Read, now, the Depositions. Each and all,  
My Lords, ye have perused that dangerous paper  
Written by the Lady Wingfield, now deceased—  
Heard sundry evidence of words unseemly  
And most unroyal spoken by her Grace.

QUEEN.

The Depositions! good, my Lord—I'd thought  
T'have seen my accusers face to face: is this  
The far renown'd and ancient English Justice?

## OFFICER.

The Deposition of Lord Viscount Rochford :—

That for th' impossible and hideous charge,

His soul abhors it with such sickly loathing,

Words cannot utter it: to stab the babe

I' the mother's arms, to beat the brains from out

A father's hoary head, had been to nature

Less odious, less accurst.

## QUEEN.

There spake my brother.

## OFFICER.

The Deposition of Sir Henry Norreys :—

That the Queen's Grace is as the new-born babe

For him—for others, he will prove her so

In mortal combat 'gainst all England.

Sir Francis Weston—doth deny all guilt,

With an asseveration, if in thought

Or word he hath demean'd her Grace's honour,

He imprecates Heaven's instant thunder-bolt.

Sir William Brereton—if all women here  
In England were as blameless as her Grace,  
The Angels would mistake this land for Heaven.

Mark Smeaton doth confess——

QUEEN.

Confess !

OFFICER.

That twice

In guilty commerce with the Queen——

QUEEN.

My Lords,

Who is it hath suborn'd this wretched boy ?  
I do arraign that man, in the dread court  
Whose sentence is eternity ! My soul  
Shall rise in judgment, when the Heavens are fire  
Around Christ's burning throne, against that man ;  
And say on earth he murder'd my poor body,  
And that false swearing boy's lost soul in Hell.

## OFFICER.

This full confession—sign'd, and in the sight  
Of witnesses deliver'd, in due form  
Of law, in every part clear and authentic.

## NORFOLK.

Anne, Queen of England, ere this high commission  
Pass to their final sentence, hast thou aught  
To urge upon their Lordships in defence  
Or palliation of these fearful charges?

## QUEEN.

My Lords! th' unwonted rigour of the King  
And mine imprisonment have something shaken  
My constant state of mind: I do beseech you,  
If I speak not so reverently or wisely  
Of the King's justice as I ought, bear with me.  
I will not say, that some of you, my Lords,  
For my religion and less weighty motives,  
Are my sworn enemies—'twere to disparage  
The unattainted whiteness of my cause,

'That had defied the malice of the basest,  
Nor deigns mistrust the high-soul'd enmity  
Of English Nobles. When that I have forced you  
To be the vouchers for my honesty,  
My fame's pure gold shall only blaze the brighter,  
Tried in the furnace of your deadly hate !  
My Lords, the King, whose bounties, numberless  
And priceless, neither time nor harsher usage  
Shall ever raze from my heart's faithful tablets—  
The King, I say, took me an humble maid,  
With not a jewel but my maiden fame :  
That I'm his wife, seeing the infinite distance  
Between my Father's daughter and a throne,  
Argues no base or lowly estimate.  
Think ye a crown so galling to the brows,  
And a Queen's name so valueless, that false  
And recreant to the virtue which advanced me,  
I should fall off thus basely ?—I am a mother,  
My Lords, and hoped that my right royal issue  
Should rule this realm : had I been worse than worst,



Looser than loosest—think ye I'd have peril'd  
The pride of giving birth to a line of Kings,  
And robb'd my children of their sceptred heritage?  
Your proofs, my Lords!—some idle words, that spoken  
By less than me, had been forgotten air:  
The force of words dwells not on their mere letters,  
But in the air, time, place, and circumstance  
In which they're utter'd—the poor laughing child  
Will call himself a King, will ye indite him  
Of treason? If less solemnly I've spoken  
Or gravely than beseem'd my queenly state,  
'Twas partly that his Grace would take delight  
In hearing my light laughing words glance off,  
As is the wont in gay and courtly France:—  
Partly, that raised from such a lowly state  
Haply to fall again, I watch'd my spirit,  
Lest with an upstart pride I might offend  
The noble Knights whose service honour'd me.  
If thus I've err'd, through humbleness familiar,  
Heaven will forgive the fault, though man be merciless!

To the rest, my Lords ! knowing nought living dared  
Attaint my fame, my enemies have ransacked  
The Grave ; the Lady Wingfield hath been summon'd  
To speak against me from her tomb—and what?—  
Vague rumours ! that I will not say base Envy  
(I'll have more charity to the dead than they  
To me), but pardonable error, zeal  
For the King's honour, may have swollen to charges,  
That if ye trust, not the shrined Vestal's pure.  
My Lords, my Lords, ye better know than I  
What subtle arts, what gilded promises  
Have been employ'd to make the noble Knights  
My fellow criminals, my Accusers ! which  
Might not have purchased life by this base service,  
And crept into a late and natural grave ?  
But let me ask, my Lords, which, base enough,  
And so disloyal, as t' abuse thus grossly  
The bounties of so good a King, had risen  
To this wild prodigality of honour,  
For a loose woman to lay down his head

And taint his name, his blood, with infamy ?  
For this besotted boy !—my Lords, I know not  
If to rebut this charge with serious speech ;  
Such as it is, my Lords, this modest beauty  
Made me a Queen, and other Kings disdain'd not  
To lay their flattering incense at its shrine.  
My Lords, there 's none amongst your noblest sons,  
Rich in ancestral titles, none so moulded  
By nature's cunning symmetry, so high  
In station, but my favour had endangered  
His truth t' his King :—and I, I that disdain'd  
Less than a crown, with wayward wantonness  
Demean me to a half form'd, base born slave !—  
I do demand—if that ye will not damn  
Your names to everlasting infamy—  
Here, in this court, this instant, ye bring forth  
This boy : if with one word I force you not  
To do me justice on this monstrous slander—  
Do with me as ye will. I 've done, and now  
Renew an old petition :—if the King,

Abused and cheated of his wonted mercies,  
Hath sworn my death ;—so order it, I pray you,  
That on my head alone fall all his wrath :  
Let these untainted gentlemen go free,  
And mine all honour'd Brother. Spare the King  
The anguish of unnecessary crime,  
And with less blood defile your own fair names.

NORFOLK.

Anne, Queen of England, first this Court commands  
You lay aside the state and ornaments  
Of England's Queen.

QUEEN.

As cheerfully, my Lords,  
As a young bride her crown of virgin flowers.

NORFOLK.

Prisoner, give ear ! I, Thomas, Duke of Norfolk,  
In name of all th' assembled Peers, declare  
The verdict of this court :—all circumstance,  
All proof, all depositions duly weigh'd,  
We do pronounce thee guilty of High Treason.—

And, further, at the pleasure of the King,  
Adjudge thy body to be burnt with fire,  
Or thine head sever'd from thy guilty shoulders.

## QUEEN.

Lord God of Hosts!—the way! the truth! the life!  
Thou know'st me guiltless; yet, oh! visit not  
On these misjudging men their wrongful sentence—  
Shew them that mercy they deny to me.  
My Lords, my Lords, your sentence I impeach not;  
Ye have, no doubt, most wise and cogent reasons,  
Best heard perhaps in th' open court, to shame  
The wretched evidence adduced. My Lords,  
I ask no pardon of my God—for this  
Of which ye've found me guilty—to the King  
In person and in heart I've been most true.  
Haply I've been unwise, irreverent,  
And with unseemly jealousies arraign'd  
His unexampled goodness. This I say not  
To lengthen out my too protracted life,  
For God hath given, will give me strength to die.

I'm not so proudly honest, but the grief  
Of my suspected chastity is gall  
And wormwood to me ; were't not my sole treasure,  
It less had pain'd me thus to see it blacken'd.  
My Lords, I take my leave :—upon your heads,  
Upon your families, on all this kingdom,  
On him who is its head and chiefest grace,  
The palm of Europe's sovereignty, may Heaven  
Rain blessings to the end of time—that most,  
And most abundant, his redeeming grace !

*A Prison.**MAGDALENE, MARK SMEATON.*

MAGDALENE.

Oh ! Mark, Mark, Mark, to find thee here, and thus !  
Brother, that I should come to shame through thee !  
Through thee, my heart's one pride ! I pray'd my way  
Through mocking men to find thee. Some did spurn me,  
Did almost void their rheum on me ; and some  
Pitied me with more barbarous charity  
That I'm thy Sister ; thou whom I had chosen  
Before the proudest Knight of all the Court.  
And thou must die—all croak'd that in mine ear,  
The Ravens ! All in drear accord.—

MARK.

Die ! die !

Oh ! yes—the solemn forms must be gone through,  
And the stern sentence read and register'd.

And then !—oh then ! what pride of rank, what distance  
Shall keep two branded criminals asunder ?  
Oh ! pardon me, that thus my selfish soul  
Rejoice in thy debasement : thou wilt know  
What I have risk'd, have suffer'd, all for thee.  
Oh ! what 's the world—its infamy—its pride—  
To those that love ? they 're their own world.

MAGDALENE.

Oh ! Mark,

Dear Mark, this dreadful prison, and the awe  
Of death—the guilt—oh ! would I dared deny it ;  
The guilt hath made thee frantic : not a word  
Hath meaning to mine ears—thou look'st on me,  
Not as a man condemn'd to die, with eyes  
All gleaming with a horrid joy.

MARK.

Thou, too,

Thou only, Magdalene, shalt find free entrance  
To the retired garden of our joy.



*The above. ANGELO.*

MARK.

Oh ! Father Angelo ! is she set free ?  
Where is she gone ? may I yet follow her,  
And tell her with what violence to my soul  
I've forced and bow'd myself to crime to save her ?

ANGELO.

She will be free anon ; thou first.

MARK.

Dost say so ?

Now will I wait, and linger all unseen ;  
And when the massy doors roll back, and slow  
The huge portcullis groans along its grooves,  
And down the drawbridge falls—I shall behold her,  
Along the frowning files of gloomy archers,  
Come gliding like a swan on turbid waters.

ANGELO.

Deceive thyself no more—I spake of freedom,

For death it is that frees th' encumber'd spirit  
From the dark prison of this world ; nor she  
Nor thou shall ever pass these iron gates,  
But to th' appointed stroke of death.

MAGDALENE.

Look, look !

He cannot speak ! he chokes, he shivers !—look,  
He 's dying. Oh ! already you have kill'd him.  
My Brother, wake !

ANGELO.

Oh ! youth, whom Heaven hath chosen  
For its blind instrument to work the ruin  
Of its most deadly enemy, I 'm come  
To fit thee for thy sacrifice—arise  
A Martyr to the glorious cause. I open  
The gates of Heaven before thy mounting soul.

MARK.

Devil ! no man of God ! unmeasured liar !  
My soul is sick at thee. Thou hold the keys  
Of Heaven, thou bloody wretch forsworn ? thou worse,

If worse can be than mine own perjured self,  
I spurn thee, curse thee, execrate thy faith  
And thee !

ANGELO.

Die, then ! die lost, accurst for ever !  
Go with thy leprous soul unwash'd to Hell,  
To see what hideous torments wait on perjury.

MARK.

Avaunt !

ANGELO.

Weak boy and thankless, whom I 've wrought  
To be a sharer in this great design ;  
Were thine head crown'd, thy body rough with scars  
Won in the service of the Church, the joy  
And pride of nations waiting on thy footsteps,  
I 'd trample on thy corpse with merciless heel,  
If o'er it lay my way to lift the throne  
Of Peter o'er the carnal Lords of earth.

MAGDALENE.

Oh ! save him—save him ! I have heard thee speak

In language that might melt the stoniest hearts ;  
I 've heard thee pray with such soul-kindling warmth  
Beside the bed of our departed Mother,  
That iron bonds had burst like flax before thee.

ANGELO.

It stands not in my power ; but, oh ! rash youth,  
Go not a rebel to the Church, to meet  
The Church's Lord :—kneel, I entreat thee, kneel ;  
Let me not say I 've slain thy soul ; confess,  
Repent, and be absolved.

MARK.

Avaunt ! away !—

Wash thine own soul from thine own sins : kneel thou,  
Howl for thy crimes, thy treasons, and thy murders !  
And, if Christ give me power to pardon thee,  
'Twill more avail thee in thy hour of need  
Than all thy formal conjuring absolutions.  
With her—with her—the gracious, good, and chaste,  
I 'll take my everlasting portion ; trust  
Even where she trusts ; go where she goes——Oh ! no,

My perjuries ! my murders ! when my soul  
Would rise to track the starlight path of hers,  
They 'll hiss me, howl me down, down, down to blackness,  
To horror, now the element of my soul.

ANGELO.

The bell ! It sounds for thee, it summons thee !  
I hear the trampling feet down the long galleries ;  
The grating bolts fall back : kneel, kneel—the Church  
Will pardon thy wild words—be reconciled.

MARK.

Off !—I will have no share or portion with you  
Think you your crimes and murders, ye, no Priests  
Of the great God of Truth and Holiness,  
Will not out-preach you from the face of earth :  
This air at length shall purify itself  
From your curst doctrines.

ANGELO.

Saints and Holy Angels,  
Hear not his blasphemies ! but thee, my daughter,  
Will I bestow among some holy Sisters.

## MAGDALENE.

With thee, my Brother's Murderer? thee, whose guile  
Has tainted his immortal soul with sin?  
Sir, I 'm a weak and foolish maid; I know not  
The nice distinction of your rival creeds;  
But this I know—'tis not the faith of Christ,  
Of Christ the merciful, the sinless Christ,  
To guile an innocent youth to such a sin,  
And make a murderer of a heart had paused  
To take the meanest insect's life. Oh! Brother,  
Dear Brother, I will die with thee; they 'll leave  
A corner in thy narrow bed where I  
May creep and hide my weary head.

## ANGELO.

Be wise.

## MAGDALENE.

No—if I may not die, I 'll starve—I 'll beg—  
I 'll serve the basest and most loathsome office,  
Ere owe my pittance to my Brother's murderer.

ANGELO.

They 're here—they are at the door.

MAGDALENE.

Ah!—

MARK.

Peace, my Sister!

Look you, I 'm calm. I 've hope—but not of life.  
I 'll tell thee—hark! I will go forth—I 'll stand  
Before the public eye—and then and there  
I will undo the deadly crime I 've done;  
Unswear what I have sworn, with such strange oaths  
That they perforce shall cancel their rash doom,  
And she shall live, and not quite curse my memory.  
Though their drums roll, and trumpets blare, I 'll shriek  
The audible truth—and then I 'll lay me down  
And take my quiet death—my quivering tongue  
Still murmuring of her slander'd innocence.  
And God shall give me grace not to denounce thee;  
Thou shalt live on, and eat thy heart to see  
Thy frustrate malice. Live, and still behold

Man after man, and kingdom after kingdom,  
Fall from the faith that perjures—murders ! Hark !  
They 're here—oh, Magdalene !—Farewell.

MAGDALENE.

Not yet,  
I 'll not part yet ; there 's none to pray for thee  
But I ; there 's none to wind thy corpse—to weep,  
To die upon it.

MARK.

Call on Christ, my Sister,  
On Christ alone ; cry loudly, fervently.  
'They 're here—come, come.

MAGDALENE.

Go on, I 'll follow thee,  
Even to the brink, into the grave : go on ;  
Till I am pluck'd perforce from thee, I 'll follow.

ANGELO (*alone*).

Oh ! thou that thrice denied'st the Lord of Life,  
Yet wert the Rock on which th' Eternal Church  
Was built, thou know'st, oh ! Peter, that in zeal



For thy soul-saving throne, against my nature,  
I 've cast away this life. Oh ! if thy servant  
Have ought deserved by this self sacrifice,  
Thou with thy powerful intercession stand  
Between his soul and endless burnings. Grant  
The Masses I will pay, while life is mine,  
May slake full soon the Purgatorial fires,  
And gales of Paradise come breathing o'er  
His rescued spirit.

So on to death, poor youth,  
Not unabandon'd, not unwept by him  
Whose aid thou scornest now ; but thou shalt own  
There, where all motives and all hearts are known.

*A Chamber in the Tower.*

QUEEN.

Oh ! Heaven ! will they keep up this heavy din  
For ever, mocking me with hope, that now  
For me they 're knolling—roll on roll and clash  
On clash !—Oh ! music most unmusical !  
That never soundest but when graves are open,  
And widows' hearts are breaking, and pale orphans  
Wringing their hands above a silent bier.—  
Four knells have rung, four now are dust—thou only  
Remain'st, my Brother ! thou art kneeling now,  
Bare thy majestic neck——A pause—more long  
Than wonted ; hath the mercy of the King—  
The justice rather ?—shalt thou rush again  
To our poor Mother's arms, and tell her yet  
She 's not all childless ?——Still no sound !—alas !  
It may be that the rapture of deep pity,

And admiration of his noble bearing,  
Suspends all hands at their blood-reeking work,  
And casts a spell of silence o'er all sounds.—  
Ha ! thou low-rolling doubling drum—I hear thee !  
Stern bell, that summon'st to no earthly temple !  
Thou 'rt now a worshipper in Heaven, my brother,  
And thy poetic spirit ranges free  
Worlds after worlds, confest th' immortal kindred  
Of the blest angels—for thy heaven-caught fire,  
Still like that fire sprang upward, and made pure  
Th' infected air of this world as it pass'd.  
My child—my mother.—they 've forbidden me  
To see once more on earth your dear lov'd faces ;  
There 's mercy in their harshness—here 's no place  
To entertain the future Queen of England,  
And God hath given me courage to keep down  
The mother in my heart ; thou too, my parent,  
What hadst thou done but torn my heart asunder,  
And all distracted my calm thoughts of Heaven.

*Enter SIR WILLIAM KINGSTON.*

QUEEN.

Now all is o'er with those brave gentlemen—  
They died, I know, Sir, as they lived, right nobly.

KINGSTON.

They gave their souls to their Redeemer, Lady,  
With protestations of your Highness' innocence,  
'Twas their sole care and thought in death; they dared  
Heaven's utmost vengeance if they falsely swore.

QUEEN.

And that false youth, clear'd he our honour?

KINGSTON.

Loud

He shrieked and struggled, not with fear of death,  
But with the burthen of some painful secret  
He would unfold—the rapid executioner  
Cut short his wailing.

QUEEN.

Most unrighteous speed!

KINGSTON.

Your Majesty 's prepar'd ?

QUEEN.

Oh ! pomp of phrase,  
To tell a sinner to prepare for judgment ;  
And yet, I think, Christ Jesus, through thy blood,  
I 'm but about to change an earthly crown  
For one that 's amaranth.

There is no end  
Of the unexhausted bounties of the King :  
He made me first the Marchioness of Pembroke,  
Duchess of Dorset, then his sceptred Queen ;  
And now a new advancement he prepares me,  
One of Heaven's angels.—

Is it true, Sir William,  
You 've brought from Calais a most dextrous craftsman  
In th' art of death ?—here 's much ado, good truth,  
To smite asunder such a neck as this,  
My own slight hands grasp easily.

Ye weep

To see me smile—I smile to see you weep.  
I have no tears : I have been reading o'er  
His agony that suffer'd on the cross  
For such poor sinners as myself, and there  
Mine eyes spent all their moisture.

KINGSTON.

We rejoice  
To see your Highness meet your doom thus calmly.

QUEEN.

I am to die—what 's that?—why, thou and I  
And all of us die every night ; and duly  
Morn to our spirits' resurrection comes  
With rosy light, fresh flowers, and birds' sweet anthems ;  
But when our grave's our bed, that instant comes  
A morning, not of this world's treacherous light,  
But fresh with palms, and musical with angels.  
Oh ! but a cruel, shameful, public death—  
There's no disease will let the spirit loose  
With less keen anguish than the sudden axe ;  
And for the shame—the sense of that 's within !

I 've thoughts brook no communion or with that  
Or fear. My death the Lord may make a way  
T' advance his gracious purpose to this land :  
There 'll be, will see a delicate timid woman  
Lay down her cheerful head upon the block  
As on a silken pillow ; when they know  
'Twas Christ that even at that dread hour rebuk'd  
Weak Nature's fears, returning home, they 'll kneel  
And seek that power that turns our death to triumph  
Sir, are you ready ?—they 'll allow me time  
To pray even there.—Go forward, Sir, we 'll follow.

*The Scaffold*

QUEEN.

My fellow subjects, I am here to die !  
The law hath judged me—to the law, I bow.  
He that doth know all hearts, before whose throne,  
Ere ye have reach'd your homes, I shall stand trembling—  
God knows—I've lived as pure and chaste as snow  
New fallen from Heaven ; yet do not ye, my friends,  
Presumptuous judge anew my dangerous cause,  
Lest ye blaspheme against the wonted goodness  
Of the King's Grace—most merciful and gentle  
I've ever known him, and if e'er betray'd  
From his kind nature, by most cogent reasons,  
Adore the hidden secrets of his justice  
As you would Heaven's. Beseech you, my good friends,  
If in my plenitude of power I've done  
Not all the good I might, ye pardon me :—



If there be here to whom I 've spoken harshly  
Or proudly, humbly I entreat forgiveness.

—No, Sir, I 'll wear no bandage o'er mine eyes,  
For they can look on death, and will not shrink.  
Beseech you, Sirs, with modesty unrobe me,  
And let my women have the decent charge  
Of my poor body.

Now, God bless the King,  
And make his Gospel shine throughout the land !

## NOTES.



## NOTES.

---

Note 1, page 41, line 5.

*From the Carthusian's decimated house.*

THE execution of the Prior and several of the Brethren of the Carthusian Monastery for denying the King's Supremacy, was amongst the most barbarous transactions of this period, the chief guilt of which must be attributed to the unrelenting disposition of the King.

Note 2, page 68, line 4.

*In that proud Prelate's heart a noble chord.*

All writers agree in the unprincipled and unnatural character of the Countess of Rochford, who suffered at a subsequent period for being accessory to the criminal conduct of Queen Catharine Howard.

Note 3, page 94, line 9.

*Shall I find justice, Sir?*

The singular conduct and language of Anne when she was arrested is strictly historical. See Burnet's History of the Reformation.

Note 4, page 125, line 11.

*The Letter.*

This is little more than a versification of the celebrated letter; the authenticity of which Mr. Ellis appears to have established.

**POEMS BY THE REV. H. H. MILMAN.**

**PUBLISHED BY**

**JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.**

---

- I. The BELVIDERE APOLLO: FAZIO, a Tragedy:  
and other Poems. 8vo. 8s. 6d.**
- II. SAMOR, Lord of the Bright City. 8vo. 12s.**
- III. The FALL of JERUSALEM: a Dramatic Poem. 8vo.  
8s. 6d.**
- IV. The MARTYR of ANTIOCH: a Dramatic Poem. 8vo.  
8s. 6d.**
- V. BELSHAZZAR: a Dramatic Poem. 8vo. 8s. 6d.**
- VI. ANNE BOLEYN: a Dramatic Poem. 8vo. 8s. 6d.**

**LONDON:**

**PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.**











